

# LONDON READER

of Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

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No. 620.—VOL. XXIV.]

FOR THE WEEK ENDING MARCH 20, 1875.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[THE WOLF AND THE LAMB.]

## THE SPIDER AND THE FLY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"The Gipsy Peer," "Fickle Fortune," etc., etc.

### CHAPTER I.

One says we are villains all.

Do they prate of the blessings of peace? We have made them a curse.

Pickpockets, each hand lusting for all that is not its own;

and lust of gain in the spirit of Cain, is it better or worse

Than the heart of the citizen hissing in war on his own hearthstone?

"Oh, come into my parlour," said the Spider to the Fly;

"'Tis the prettiest little parlour that ever you did spy."

Old Song.

It is sunset; a dusky red is spreading out from the horizon and throwing a dusky reflection upon the sullen sea and its more sullen shores. A weird, awful shore it is, encumbered with huge rocks and strangely beween stone.

A grim, shuddering waste, made grimmer and more terrible by strange, stray specks of humanity, that, seen in the falling sunlight seemed rather distorted creations of fancy than actual human beings. From stone to stone they pace, stopping with a peculiar halting, laborious gait, and looking sullenly earthward as if their eyes were chained to the hateful, barren shore and the looking upward were death.

Look closer and gain fresh cause for wonderment. There is a strange likeness in these dim figures. They move alike, their gaze is directed sullenly downward alike, they are dressed alike. A sad, dingy gray garment, half-shirt, half-tunic, relieved in all cases by a patch of crimson across the arm, upon which is stamped, in letters of black relief, a number. Their feet are shod with thick, heavy, iron-soled boots, a coarse, hideous cap is upon their heads, and the hair beneath it is cut almost to the skin.

The faces—ah, no! who could describe those faces? Who can speak of those crime-stamped brows,

those passion-distorted lips, and those despairing eyes?

Listen! There is no sound but the sudden crash, crash of the falling stone that the coarse-grained hands are pushing, and the bent, gray-clad shoulders are heaving, from the quarries. One other sound still, heard only at intervals when the stone is silent, and that is the tramp, tramp of the sentries, who, like the figures of Death and Eternity in the old Roman temple for ever, day and night, march to and fro on the battlements, for ever, night and day, keeping watch and ward on the terrible gray-clad figures, that despairfully toil upon the barren plain below.

It is the convict station at Portland, and the figures are the shadows of some of England's vilest criminals.

The sun sinks lower, the warders, stationed at measured intervals between the various gangs, yawn with weary impatience and long for the sound of the prison-bell. When that rings, which it will do within half an hour, the gangs will have finished their work for the day and the march for the gloomy prison upon the heights will commence.

The warders yawn impatiently, but the silent gray-clad figures feel no impatience. They have nothing to long for, nothing to hope for.

One and all tolling on this particular plain toil on till death, and that has been longed for so long that it seems so far off as to be hopeless.

Death comes to men free and happy, but them it seems to avoid; it leaves them to their most awful punishment of life.

The quarter has chimed, the warders have grown more impatient, perhaps less vigilant, or does this tall, thin figure with No. 103 stamped upon his arm only fancy so? for he has broken the rule which says that no man shall separate himself from his particular gang, and is crouching behind a boulder. Is he resting? His hazel, hunted eyes flash from the nearest warder to the sentinels upon the battlements. His hand grasps the chain at his leg to deaden its rattle as he slides along. His eyes drop from the sentinel and travel swiftly but keenly along the grim

rank of the next gang. They rest upon one gray-clad figure numbered ninety-nine. His breath comes faster, he crouches until his breast touches the ground, and though his lips are too tightly pressed for speech his eyes seem to speak in the intensity of their gaze.

Perhaps No. 99 feels their gaze, for as he stoops with the gang to heave the hard, cruel stone he lifts his small, villanous eyes and sees the dark, piercing ones fixed so earnestly upon him. A start, imperceptible, thrills through him, and as he raises his shoulder he contrives to lift one hand as a signal that he has seen and understands.

No. 103 seems satisfied, he drops his eyes with a sigh and waits with sullen patience.

The stone is upheaved. The gang moves round and pauses to gain breath.

A few of the miserable figures drop upon the stones.

No. 99 flings himself sullenly upon the stone behind which crouches No. 103, and so effectually conceals the piercing eyes from the warders' cat-like vigilance.

"Jem," says a low, hoarse voice from below the stone. "Can you hear me? Don't turn your head, and speak low."

"I hear," replies No. 99, with a hoarse voice.

"Jem, there's a chance; don't start or I'll kill you. There's a chance, but it wants working. I've been wanting to speak to you for six weeks. Warder No. 24 drinks like a fish. He'll be drunk to-night—tonight at seven. I've seen the stuff in the corridor. Our cells are opposite. He carries the keys in his breast-pocket. At half-past seven to-night, Jem, he or I will be a dead man. You know me and my stroke. If I can get a clear blow with the iron jug and without noise we are free. Once in the corridor with his keys, we can gain this cursed cliff. Don't speak—he's looking this way! The tide comes in at ten, we must swim for it—go this minute or we are lost."

A warder leaps along the stones; No. 99 rises as if rested; No. 103 crawls like a serpent back to his proper gang.

Crash, crash, the last stone is lifted for to-night; the bell chimed the hour, the gangs form with listless, weary sullenness into lines, stalwart warders, well armed, order them sternly to march. Another dreary, hopeless day of toil is done.

The sun has sunk, the red glow has left the sky, darkness has fallen upon the surging sea and barren shore.

The tramp of the sentinels can just be heard above the rattle of the falling beach. It is too dark to see them, but two figures are crawling under the beetling cliffs, they crawl hand-in-hand, fearful of loosing each other for a moment. Not a word is spoken, their movement makes no sound. Five, ten, twenty minutes pass and then they stop and draw long, husky gasps of relief.

"Jem," says one, "where are we?"

No. 99 shakes his head and peers into the darkness.

"Under the cliff," returns the other. "Right under the guard-house, I think; if so, far enough."

"Quite far enough, captain," is the hoarse reply.

"And now we are here what's the next move?"

The other remains silent for a moment while he fumbles at his leg, then touches his breast and face.

"What's the matter, guv'nor, are you hurt?"

"A little," is the reply. "I'm bleeding like an ox."

No. 99 emits a grim, guttural laugh.

"There's enough of that with both on us," he says.

"It's like our luck as the boat should turn. I thought you'd struck him straight too, guv'nor."

"So I did," is the curt retort. "No matter; we are here and that's luck enough."

"But we can't stop here."

"We must till the tide's up, and it's coming now, half an hour and the fishing yawls will be in front of us."

His companion shudders.

"The fishing yawls!" he repeats. "D'ye mean we're to swim for them, guv'nor, through this, in the pitch dark? Why, it's death!"

"Or freedom. Death! I join, my man, you're worse than an idiot. What's the name you'll give to what we've left behind us? If that's life, we take death, Jem, and be thankful for it."

As he speaks, with a bitterness beyond description, he stoops and fumbles at his leg again. The sharp ears of his companion catch the grating of steel on iron.

"What's that, guv'nor?"

"A file," is the reply.

"Where did you get it from?" asks the other, with undisguised astonishment.

"I made it, Jem," replies his companion, quietly.

"What with?"

"An old piece of iron and my brains. It's a good one, try it for yourself."

As he speaks he shakes the horrible link of iron from his foot and passes the instrument to the other.

No. 99 takes it with a muttered oath.

"You're a wonderful man, captain, a wonderful man. There ain't nothing as you can't do—or won't do if we gets clear of this frightful torment. I'll be sworn the game's all planned out a'ready."

"It is," replies the other, with quiet coolness.

The grating of the file stops for a moment.

"I thought so! S'help me, if I didn't! Might a humble pal as has always stood by you, captain, ask what the move is? It'd pass the time away and keep the shivers off. There's a curse in the very air o' this place that cramps a man's heart and a'most chokes him. Tell us the plot, captain. I'm yours, and you know it."

The captain looks into the darkness before him in silence for a moment, then, speaking in the whisper above which their voices had never for a moment been raised, he says:

"I'll tell you, Jem, as we swim together, as you say. We must, taking all things into consideration, and so—Jem, give me your hand."

The man he called Jem feels about in the darkness until his hard-grimed hand is clasped in the softer one of his companion, and waits silently.

"I'm going to take your oath," says the captain, coolly.

"Swear that you'll follow me faithfully—as, to give you your due, you always have done—right to the end of what is to come. Swear it, Jem, and I'll open up the game. You'll keep your oath I know, because I'll swear at the same time that this hand of mine shall wring your neck if you break it. You swear?"

"I swear, captain!" replies Jem, hoarsely. "I've never played you false yet, captain. Would it pay me to do it now, after this little bout? Would it pay me, I asks yer?"

"No; now nor ever. Come closer; these cursed cliffs seem to me to have ears. Keep a look out all round. I'm watching for the lights of the fishing yawls."

"All right, captain," replies the other, eagerly.

"Good, if it's only for talking's sake," and he shivers under the strain of long-sustained fear and excitement.

"You're right, Jem, I have a game on the board already. It wouldn't be me if I hadn't. It's a good game too and worth playing. Better than the last, which landed us here—not so risky either. Did I ever tell you where I came from? No? Well, it isn't likely, when I come to think of it. I ain't one of the communicative sort. What do you say to India—to Madras? I am a captain, Jem, by something more than courtesy. Captain Murpoint's a good enough name and title, and they're my real ones. They'll do again too."

For a moment he relapses into silence, his eyes scanning the sea before him. Then he takes up the thread again, in a tone rather of soliloquy than communication; but his companion, though apparently forgotten, listens eagerly.

"Five years ago I was the most popular man in Madras. You cannot understand all that short sentence means, my friend; no matter. I was a rich man—as men went—and could count friends by the score. If there had been fewer friends and less what I might not have been here; who knows? No one, and no one cares; not even I myself. Madras! I see it now. Bah! A high-flown description of the presidency would be lost on you, Jem, and it is a rule of mine to waste nothing. At Madras, among the host of friends some of whom plundered me, and some of whom I had the extreme happiness to plunder, was one, the best and bravest of the lot, John Midway."

"John Midway," repeats the man, Jem, to show his companion that he is listening closely.

"John Midway, a merchant, a prince among merchants, with a fortune in England, India—and I know not where else also. He was a fine fellow, but simple—simple as a school-boy, and too beautifully supplied with those awkward courtesies called feelings. We were bosom friends. I borrowed his money, and he loved me too well to remind me of the debt—you understand that, Jem—that is something unlike your comprehension."

Jem chuckles with honest enjoyment.

"He made me his confidant—told me everything of his own affairs and a great deal of other people's. He had a daughter. I remember her name—Viola. Beautiful, he said she was; but that goes for nothing. I'll be bound, my friend, that you would have called a bantam of your own, though it replied every one of your extremely plain questions, a swan. The mother was dead, there was only one relation of any consequence—an aunt, and Jack Midway loved this little girl better than he did me—and that's saying a good deal. One night—when we were sitting in the verandah of his mansion on the hills, watching the Brahmins at their prayers, he declared his intention of making me the sole guardian of this girl. He prayed me—if anything happened to him—to be a second father to her, or at least a brother, considering that he was so much older than I. I swore—readily enough—that I'd watch over her like a guardian angel, and, after drawing tears from him by my fervid eloquence, delicately borrowed a hundred pounds. Poor Jack! I never saw each other again. A special messenger arrived that night with news from England. His business—an enormous one—required his presence to tide over an emergency, and with a hasty hand-shake he left me, reminding me of my promise, and declaring his intention to draw up on parchment the declaration of his wishes as to my guardianship over his daughter.

"Good-bye, old fellow," he said. 'It's a long journey; but I feel safe. I've written about you in every letter to my little darling; I shall be able to tell her now what a grand guardian she'll have. Good-bye, and Heaven bless you!'

"Jem, my friend, don't believe the good people of this world when they talk of a special providence for honest men; Jack Midway was drowned on that homeward voyage, and I, Captain Howard Murpoint, was left to live and rot in a convict station."

"Yes, the ship went down, and soon after Captain Howard Murpoint went down likewise. I got tired of the army; that's the mild way of putting it, though if the truth must be spoken the army got tired of me—or rather my wonderful luck at cards. You know my little trick with the ace? Enough. It suited me to cut the military life. How was I to do it? A fool would have deserted and got shot. I, not being a fool, managed differently. There was a slight skirmish on the frontier one moonlight night. My men were cut to pieces like packthread. I, by a miracle, escaped. Walking over the corpse-strewn field, one of those happy thoughts which are the inspiration of knaves struck me. My corporal, a good fellow, had fallen at his post. I knew it was my corporal by his accoutrements, his face and features had been obliterated by a cannon ball. Supposing, was my thought, that Captain Howard Murpoint's

regimentals were upon that poor fellow, then every one would say that the said Captain Murpoint had fallen with glory and honour, and that the missing corporal had either been carried away by the Sepoys or deserted.

"Jem, my friend, I lost not a moment, but there and then exchanged clothes with the corpse, threw a cloak over my new corporal's regimentals and started for the coast."

"I reached Paris—unfortunately for the Parisians. When Paris grew too hot I gracefully fluttered to my native land. My native land for eighteen months proved as rich a harvest as a man of talent could wish."

"During those eighteen months I cleared—no matter—it is all gone, swallowed up in that fiasco. Idiot that I was to descend to the level of such poor vermin as you! What could I expect? Were these hands made for burglary, were these brains—Bah! this is wasting time. Some sweet friends of yours persuaded me to change my line, and I came to grief; dragging you in for revenge's sake. Plain truth you see, Jem, I scorn to tell a falsehood—when there is nothing to be got by it. Transportation for life! It was a hard sentence, and I wished when I heard it, and a hundred times since, that they had not balked Jack Ketich. I wished it every day till a week ago."

"What changed me? A mere bagatelle. A newspaper. A year-old newspaper, which that lot of a wander dropped from his pocket. I snatched it up and read it in my cabin. It would lighten many a load in that horrible cell. I opened it next morning, and the first words my eyes rested on were:

"Grand Fête at Midway Park, Novaddie.—On the occasion of Miss Midway's sixteenth birthday a large party of personal friends and the tenants of the Midway estate was gathered at the Park, where most extensive preparations have been for some time in progress to ensure comfort for the various festivities. In the morning the numerous gaily dressed visitors gave themselves up to the enjoyment of scenery, boating and the collection of croquet. In the evening the grand hall—which was decorated by Owen Jones—was opened for a ball to which invitations to the number of two hundred had been issued. It is needless to say that the whole affair was brilliantly successful, and that the twentieth of July will be a white day in the lives of Miss Midway's tenants and those fortunate friends who were enabled to partake of her hospitality. Miss Midway is at present staying, in company with her aunt, Mrs. W. Midway, at her residence, Midway Park."

"That is something like it, Jem—all glitters and sparkle, diamonds and rubies. I swear, much as I had revelled in that grey paper a moment before, I could not read another line of it. Every time I tried my eyes looked back to Midway Park and the wealthy Miss Midway."

"This Violet was to have been my ward, and Jack's money, his enormous estates, ay, the very diamonds she wore were to have been under my charge. What an opportunity I had lost! With such a chance, what might I not have accomplished? I might have feathered my nest, ay, have filled it even, with every penny of Jack's gold; for what was a puny little bit of a girl to count for?—If I had been free. Free that was the word, and it haunted me. One day it rang in my ears, making a chorus to the grand doings at Midway Park, and at last I swore that I'd give this place the slip or die in the attempt. Once away from here—once in England, the way to Jack Midway's gold is as plain as the road to Rome. I am once more Captain Murpoint. I turn up, looking the gentleman that I am, at the park in the character of her father's friend. She knows all about me, remembers me almost as well as she does her father. Keeps all his letters, those letters in which he tells her that he is hunting, fighting, playing, or dining with his dear Murpoint, on her bosom perhaps. Here is dear Murpoint, and she welcomes me to Midway Park with open arms and a shower of tears."

There was a moment's pause; Jem crept closer to the daring schemer.

"And me, captain? you won't forget me."

"No, you go with me as my servant. No thanks. I shouldn't take you if I didn't want you, my friend. I never did a generous action in my life, I leave that for idiots. I want you for a hundred things. I want a man who is completely under my thumb—in my power. You are in both those situations, so I help you to escape and take you with me. If you have any gratitude keep it bottled up, don't let it evaporate in words. Well?"

The man mutters something faintly.

"But, captain, is that all the game? Don't we hold no more cards than that? It seems a chance, a regular chance."

"And what else is life?" says the captain, with a short laugh of contempt. "But these are not all



the cards. Even to you, my bosom friend, I do not choose to show my whole hand. Enough that I hold sufficient cards to play the game, and that I have sufficient brains to win it. You, my poor Jen, have neither cards nor brains! Stop! what's that?" and his low, subtle voice sinks to a sharp hiss.

"That's the light of the fishing smack," hoarsely returns his companion.

"Not that, idiot!" is the retort, in a sharper voice. "That up above. A thousand fends! It is the moon!"

A smothered cry breaks from the parched lips of the convict Jen.

He springs to his feet, then falls to the ground with a quiver of excitement.

"Captain, we are lost! In two minutes it will be like day! The soldiers can see every speck on the water for a mile round!"

"Silence!" cries the captain, crouching so motionless that his gray-clad figure looks part and parcel of the rock against which it presses. "The tide is in. That is the smack before us. Swim like the fend! If we reach it we are safe. I have enough to bribe them. Swim for liberty and life!—now!"

And with the word he rises to his feet, leaps over the patch of beach that intervenes between cliff and sea and plunges into the foremost wave.

His companion follows, and not a moment too soon.

The moon that had been battling with the dark mass of clouds, rises conqueror at last and swims majestically into the clear heavens, lighting up the sea till it glows like a plain of diamonds.

Not a moment too soon, for the monotonous tramp, tramp of the nearest sentinel upon the ramparts above is suddenly broken, and his sharp voice gives the challenge:

"Who goes there?"

For answer the moon shoots a bright beam of light full upon the dark figures swimming towards the smack.

With a shout of alarm the sentinel brings his musket to his shoulder.

"Dive!" hisses the white lips of the captain. Crack! ping! and a bullet cleaves the air.

Another moment and the rampart is alive. Lights flash to and fro, showing up for a moment the excited faces of the soldiers.

Shouts of warning and anger break through the silence and affright the sea-gulls.

Then an officer's voice rises above the din.

"There they are close by the smack! Ready!—present!—fire!"

Crack! crack! crack!

"Ah! that's got them! There they go—oh, what? couldn't see them?" says the commandant, angrily, repeating the hesitating suggestion of a subordinate that the moon was obscured and that he couldn't see the men as he fired. "Nonsense! You winged them right enough. Anyway, we must say we did. There have been too many escapes lately to allow of any more. We shall have the authorities down upon us for negligence. It's a singular thing that I can't run down to the town to get a rubber at whilst but that somebody must go to sleep. It isn't often I take a little pleasure, but sure as I leave my post for an hour or two some foolhardy or sleepy-headed warden lets one of those vermin get away. There's warden No. 24 got his back broken, and the Lord Harry knows what. Serve him right! It must be brushed up, mind! There have been too many escapes lately by far. If there's any inquiring, mind you winged them twice, and they are dead as nails at the bottom of the sea."

The sentinels give the salute, and the officer starts off to finish the interrupted rubber.

Next morning the official whose business it was to draw up such statements reported that convicts Nos. 108 and 99 had attempted escape, but were shot down by the sentinel while swimming towards a fishing smack.

## CHAPTER II.

Oh, beautiful creature, what am I  
That I dare to look her way?  
Think I may hold dominion sweet,  
Lord of the pulse that is lord of her heart,  
And dream of her beauty with tender heed,  
From the delicate Arch of her feet  
To the space that, bright and light as the  
crust  
Of a peacock, sits on her shining head.  
And she knows it not; oh, if she knew it,  
To know her beauty would half undo it.

Tranquil.

In the drawing-room at Mildmay Park was seated, in her own particular easy-chair, Mrs. Henry Mildmay.

Mrs. Henry Mildmay was a lady of that good old sort of whom our modern demitisses are rather tired of receiving as models for imitation. Herself ladylike and distinguished in feature, dress and manner, slight of figure, delicate of hand and more delicate of nerve,

she was deeply imbued with a love of good birth, elegant manners and a large income, all of which she possessed in a fair and comfortable degree.

Mrs. Mildmay was John Mildmay's only sister, and at his death she had undertaken the sole charge of his daughter Violet, whom she loved as a daughter and by whom she was beloved in return as a mother, with just this difference that whereas the dear old lady was rather afraid of her beautiful, high-spirited ward, the girl was as fearless as a lioness, and gave her love unalloyed and unshadowed.

Violet Mildmay had inherited the brave, simple nature of the merchant prince, and was a realization of that most glorious ideal—a pure-minded, tender-hearted English girl.

Mrs. Mildmay was knitting—a favourite amusement, or occupation, as she would have dignified it, for the results of her pastime were distributed amongst the Penitentiary poor—and sinking into a comfortable doze, from which the sharp striking of an ormolu clock aroused her.

"Dear me!" she murmured, placidly smiling, "dear me, Violet, I was nearly asleep."

The remark finding no answer, the old lady turned in her chair and found the handsomely furnished room was empty.

"Violet, where are you, my dear? What a restless girl it is! She was here five minutes ago, and now she has gone. Just like poor John, never still ten minutes together."

At that moment the conservatory door was thrown open with a suddenness that made the old lady drop her needle and a sweet but full voice immediately behind her said:

"Whom am I like, auntie?"

"No one in particular, my dear," faltered the old lady, with a pleasant smile and a "Thank you" for the needle, which the owner of the voice had sprung forward to recover before the old lady could stoop.

"Where have you been, my dear? I did not know you had left the room."

"No? Only on the lawn. It was so hot in here, and you were falling so comfortably asleep that I thought I would creep away before it was too late, for I know I frighten you if I move when you are fast asleep, auntie mine. Am I not careful now? Am I not improving?"

"You are everything that is good and dear, Violet," said the old lady, stroking the girl's head, as it leaned itself to a level with her white hand. "But don't sit on the floor, my love, you will cease that pretty merrily."

"Shall I?" said the sweet voice, absently, and Violet sprang to her feet.

Her aunt, with another little start—she started on the average twice in every ten minutes when her niece was near—looked up with mild nervousness at the tall, graceful figure, her gaze gradually changing to one of affectionate admiration.

And who could withhold admiration?

There was beauty in the cleanly cut oval face, with its clear brunette skin and deep brown eyes; there were youth, strength, grace in the undulating figure; there was a nameless, indescribable charm about the girl, her figure, voice, and gesture, which enthralled young and old of both sexes and demanded admiration rather than won it.

"My poor dress," she said, with a laughing pout. "He was—is a dress a he or a she, auntie?—I'll say 'it,' was so clean and stately only this morning, and now! Look, that is water. The fish leapt out of the fountain and Tray has pawed me with his wet feet. It's no use my trying to be good you see, dear, circumstances are too strong for me,"

and with a musical, rippling laugh the light-hearted girl ran to the open piano.

The old lady sighed, but with a smile.

"I am almost beginning to think they are, Violet," she said, in her low-pitched voice, so great a contrast to the full, melodious one of the girl.

"No, you will never make me anything better than an untutored savage, auntie. You've tried so hard, so very hard, to teach me how to enter a room, steal from chair to chair, lower my voice, and smile properly. But all in vain, I can't be a model young lady, and I am always making you jump."

"Not jump, my dear."

"Well, start then? It is all the same, auntie. Fancy you jumping! Now, I can jump. I jumped over the brook. No, not quite," and here she laughed out again, "but almost quite. Poor Maria, she has hard times with me. Do you know, I shouldn't like to be lady's-maid to Miss Violet Mildmay; no, not for all the mines of Peru—or is it Patagonia?"

Without waiting for an answer she struck a chord and dashed into a waltz.

That came to an end, however, as suddenly as it commenced, and the graceful figure was on its feet.

"It is too hot to play, is it not? How can you knit such weather as this? It makes me boil, yes, actually boil, to watch you!"

"Don't watch me then, my dear," suggested the old lady, mildly. "Go and sit in the arbour. It will be cool there in the shade."

"Well, I will. But I warn you, auntie, I shan't sit long. I never can sit still long. I'll try the arbour, though," and catching up her rustic hat, which for the nonce had fallen from her lovely young head to a little rest on the floor, the restless girl swept in a wave of muslin and tulle from the room.

Mrs. Mildmay rose, folded her knitting into a neat little ball, stored it away in a neat little basket, and was about to quit the room, but before she could open the door Violet had run through the conservatory again.

"Well, my dear?" said the old lady, patiently.

"Too hot in the arbour, auntie," said the girl, with a charming and decisive shake of her head. "The lawn is absolutely simmering. I shall go on the cliffs."

"My dear, you will be roasted! Come and sit in the shade here, in my chair."

"Oh! then I should be suffocated. No, I'll try the cliffs. What is the time? Just time for a quiet stroll. Good bye."

"Stop, my dear Violet. Pray don't go without your sun shade! You will be burnt up!"

"Right. I'd forgotten that stupid old thing. Where is it? Let me see, where did I throw it?"

And she stood in the middle of the room, swinging her hat to and fro and fanning herself.

"Is that it under the piano?" said Mrs. Mildmay, pointing to the sunshade where it lay ignominiously entangled with the legs of the instrument.

"Yes, that is it. What dear, sharp eyes you have, auntie. Come along, sunshade! It's rather hard that you, being so much the weaker, should be burnt to save me."

And with another happy nod and smile away she floated again, her long, diaphanous skirt whisking a current of cool air through the room and just escaping the overturning of a table of bric-a-brac by an inch.

The cliffs to which Miss Mildmay bent her steps were within five minutes' walk of the lawn, and were one of the young lady's favourite promenades.

From them, looking seawards, she could feast her eyes upon the ocean, ever restless and sportful, like herself; turning landwards there jutted far a fair stretch of well-wooded scenery, with Mildmay House in the foreground, and the sparkling Tivoli, where it ran in a semicircle towards the sea as a belt to enclose the whole.

On a part of this there stood another house, larger even and more pretentious than Mildmay's. This was the Cedars, a modern residence of yellow brick and stucco erected at enormous cost by a certain Jabez Dodson, who had amassed a large fortune by the melting and manufacturing of tallow.

The Cedars and its inhabitants were the objects of Mrs. Mildmay's supreme detestation. Loving good birth and high breeding as she did it was only natural that tallow should be detestable to her, and that the large and altogether hideous house which the retired tradesman had erected should be a perpetual eyesore to her.

Often, as the sunset lit up the yellow edifice, bringing out all its ugly points with unmerciful distinctness the good old lady had spoken from her heart, and with a sigh that shook the bugles in her cap she had regretted that Providence had not been kind or considerate enough to allure Mr. Dodson's fancy to a more distant spot.

"That house spoils the view and gives me the horrors, my dear," she would often say, but never meeting with any farther sympathy from Violet than expressed by a laugh.

"It is ugly, I'll admit," she would remark, "but you need not look at it so often."

"I can't help it, my dear," the old lady would avow, "I am fascinated by it. I am so glad that the dreadful man did not build his menstrosity during your poor father's lifetime. It would have been a cruel blow to him. I can't think why he didn't secure all the land around. Then you would have been safe from such a visitation. Fancy a tallow-chandler or melter, or whatever he calls himself, setting up a habitation within a stone's throw of your drawing-room window."

Violet would laugh again, with pleasant enjoyment of her aunt's pet aversion.

"It doesn't very much matter that I can see, aunt, after all," she had once urged. "Of course it would be better without the Cedars, but, to give Mr. Dodson his due, the family have never annoyed me. I have never seen them even. I scarcely know how many there are of them: do you?"

Mrs. Mildmay shook her head in the negative, but a nod in the affirmative showed she was doubtful.

"I think there are only the father, mother, and one son. But I have never seen them, at least I think not."

"Nor I," said Violet. "So you see, they are not such dreadful characters after all. Poor people, I daresay they are as constantly deploring the nearness of the Park, and declaring that we spoil their view—which we certainly do."

"How absurd!" said Mrs. Mildmay. "Violet, I really believe you do not dislike them half so much as one would expect."

"Wicked as I am, I can't hate people I have never seen," Violet here laughingly replied.

And in like manner she always turned her aunt's disparagement of the Cedars aside, and contrived to say a word for the obnoxious individuals whom she had never seen.

This morning as she stood on the edge of the cliff, looking first out to sea and then at the sweet landscape, a smile rested for a moment upon her face, and her lips murmured:

"Poor auntie, if she could see the Cedars now! It looks as if the tallow which built it had caught fire. It makes me hotter than ever to look at it!"

And with a little flutter of her dainty handkerchief she seated herself upon the dried-up grass and turned her eyes seaward again.

As she sat thus she formed a picture beautiful enough to gladden the eyes of a Veronese in her glorious youth and loveliness, standing out in its cloud of airy muslin against the vividness of the summer sky.

Perhaps an individual slowly climbing the steep path behind her was of the same opinion, for he stopped in his laborious ascent and, baring his well-shaped head to the slight breeze, stood lost in an admiring reverie.

How long he would have indulged in his admiring observations it would be difficult to say, but his reverie was suddenly disturbed and his fixed regard turned aside in some confusion by the movement of Violet's head.

She had been watching a sea-gull and following the bird's progress with her eyes, and had suddenly become aware of the proximity of the stranger and of the fixed and admiring regard of his two dark eyes.

Almost too suddenly, for with something that nearly approached a start she half rose.

Regretting the movement before it was complete, she re-seated herself, and in so doing loosened her hold of the sunshade, which with the perversity of such things instantly took advantage of its freedom to sail over the cliff.

Violet sprang to her feet and thoughtlessly was about to peer over the precipice in search of it, but before she had reached the extreme edge she felt a strong hand upon her arm, and, turning with some astonishment, found herself face to face with the observant stranger.

For a moment they regarded each other in silence. It is worthy of notice how much and how acutely the eye can comprehend in so short a time.

Violet saw a handsome face tanned and moustached, a tall, lithe figure, to whose strength the grasp upon her arm bore witness, a pair of earnest, fearless eyes, and a mouth which might have been grave but for the smile which made it remarkably pleasant.

"Pray forgive me!" said the gentleman, removing his hat with his disengaged hand. "But have you fully considered the danger which attends a downward glance from this height?"

The tone was respectful, almost reverently so, but there were a dignity and a nameless music in it also that carried it even farther in one's liking.

Violet blushed like a school girl, as she would have expressed it, and without a word stepped back from the danger which she certainly had not considered, but which by the light of the gentleman's question was now fully revealed.

"I thank you very much," she said as his strong hand dropped from her arm and the stranger's face allowed itself to relax into a smile. "It was foolish and thoughtless, I," and she shuddered, "I might have fallen over. People have been known to, have they not?"

"Yes, a great many," he replied. "The strongest brain might be excused a sudden dizziness on the edge of such a precipice as this."

"Of course," assented Violet laughing, but very quietly. "I am so much obliged, I thought only of my stupid sunshade."

"Ah!" he said, quietly, "I had forgotten that. Perhaps it has lodged on one of the jutting bushes; if it is I may recover it for you," and he approached the edge.

Violet, who had not quite recovered from the shock which the sudden sense of her peril had produced, uttered a slight cry of warning and rebuke.

"Oh, please do not look over! It is of no consequence, not the slightest in the world."

The gentleman looked back at her alarmed face, then up at the blazing sun, and smiled significantly.

"It is of great consequence," he said, and before Violet could say another word to prevent him he had gained the edge and was upon his knees looking over.

"I can see it," he said, "and I think I can get it. The danger was not so great after all, there are one or two ledges here which will bear a man's weight, I should think, and below them is your sunshade."

While he was speaking he was cautiously but fearlessly lowering himself on to one of the ledges of which he had spoken, and Violet's horrified eyes lost first his legs, then his body, and last of all his good-looking face, as it disappeared below the edge.

Rooted to the spot with terror which she in vain struggled to suppress, Violet grew white as death and almost as cold.

At last her terror found utterance in a deep-drawn moan.

"Oh! come back! Please come back! I am sure you will be killed! It is horrible! Do come back!"

While she was still entreating and commanding the handsome, careless face arose above the surface again, and with slow, cautious movements the stranger, with the recovered sunshade in his hand, was beside her.

Violet drew a long breath of relief, and then with a smile that was better than all the thanks in the world said:

"I won't thank you, for I think you were more foolish than even I. You said it was dangerous to look over and you actually went over! And all for this stupid, worthless thing." And she shook the sunshade with annoyance.

"Not altogether for the sunshade," said the gentleman, smiling again. "But I am glad I have got it for you, and I assure you the danger was less than I at first imagined it; indeed for me there was no danger. I am blessed with a steady nerve, and have had some experience in mountaineering."

Violet looked down, and then up at his calm face.

"It was very good and kind of you," she said, "and I will thank you after all, I think." Then she made a movement, which he took in intimation that he might say good-day, and, accordingly, he raised his hat—or rather would have done so had not the wind saved him the trouble.

"How provoking!" said Violet, looking after the hat as it sailed over the cliff, in imitation of the sunshade. "I am afraid there is a fatality about this spot. I do hope you will not go down after it too!"

"No, indeed!" he said, with a light, pleasant laugh, "my hat is really of no consequence—"

"Oh! but of more than my parasol! You have nothing to protect your head, and the sun is quite as hot as it was five minutes ago." And she smiled naively.

"True," he said. "But my head is used to scorching, in fact rather likes it."

"You must take my sunshade," said Violet, with provoking gravity.

"No, thank you," he said, imitating the gravity and suppressing the smile. "I do not dread the sunstroke, and I have but a few steps to go," nodding to the blazing Cedars.

Violet was guilty of an unmistakable start.

"The Cedars!" she exclaimed, extending her beautiful eyes to their widest, "but you are not—" and she paused as if absolutely too astonished to conclude the sentence.

"My name is Leicester Dodson," said the gentleman, a slight but not imperceptible reserve showing upon his face and in the tone of his voice as he spoke.

"Mr. Dodson's son!" said Violet, slowly, as if the intelligence were too astonishing to be taken in instant.

The gentleman bowed.

"Mr. Dodson's and Mrs. Dodson's son," he said, with a smile.

For a moment Violet stood still, then her face lit up with its delicious smile, and, with a frank gesture, she held out her hand.

"Then we are neighbours," she said, as Mr. Leicester Dodson, with as much surprise as his courtesy would allow his face to express, took the well-shaped little hand. "I am Miss Mildmay."

Mr. Leicester dropped her hand as if it had grown red-hot and had burnt him. Violet coloured then, but understood his gesture of repudiation instantly.

"He knows how aunt dislikes his people and is sorry he rescued my sunshade," she thought.

"I am happy to have been of some slight service to you, Miss Mildmay," he said, coldly, with a careless but distant bow; then he turned and walked slowly down the steep path.

Violet, looking down after him until his bare head had dropped slowly out of sight, then said, audibly:

"Well, that is pride now; but it is proper pride, I think," smiled rather sadly, and returned homewards. "Aunt!" she said, coming into the drawing-room just before dinner was served, and more quietly than was her wont, "I've had an adventure on the cliffs, startling and melodramatic. My sunshade blew over, and a gentleman was polite enough to go after it."

"My dear!" exclaimed the old lady, thinking it one of her darling's jokes.

"It's true, aunt. A stranger risked his neck—precious, no doubt, to himself and family—for a fifteen-and-sixpenny sunshade. Imprudent but heroic, was it not?"

"Very good and kind, but imprudent as you say, my dear. Young men are so rash!"

"This one was not," said Violet, picking at the costly fringe on her dress, "he was as calm and cool as—as a cucumber."

"A stranger," said Mrs. Mildmay, smiling. "Whom can it be, I wonder? Somebody staying at the Wenningfords, no doubt?"

"Aunt!" said Violet, then suddenly changing the subject, "do not the vicar and his wife dine with us on Saturday?"

"Yes, my dear, and I have asked Mr. and Mrs. Giles. The vicar is a dear, good man, but—"

"Rather a bore," put in Violet, decidedly.

Mrs. Mildmay looked shocked, but Violet, without waiting for a reprimand, went on, with slow and most unusual gravity:

"Do you know, aunt, I should like to ask this heroic gentleman of mine?"

"A perfect stranger, my dear!" said Mrs. Mildmay, with a smile.

"Yes, a perfect stranger, but a gentleman. Perfect strangers who are gentlemen, and heroic enough to risk their lives for one's sunshade, are people worth knowing. Aunt, ask him. He is tall, rather dark, golden-brown you know, nice eyes, a yellow moustache, and—I think that's all I remember—I was going to mention the smile, but of course he may not always wear that."

"I don't remember him, my dear," said Mrs. Mildmay. "But if you really want to know him, I'll try and find out who he is from the servants."

"And ask him to dinner?" urged Violet.

Mrs. Mildmay looked bewildered and puzzled.

"Yes, my dear, if you wish it, and he really belongs to the Wenningfords."

"I do wish it, aunt," said Violet. "But he doesn't belong to the Wenningfords. He belongs to the Cedars, and is no other than Mr. Leicester Dodson, the tallow molder's son!"

It is Saturday evening, and Mrs. Mildmay's little dinner is in good progress.

There are the vicar and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Giles from the Ferns, and, wonderful to say, the Dodsons from the Cedars.

Miss Violet had, as usual, had her way with her aristocratic aunt, and the Dodsons are here.

For a whole day Mrs. Mildmay, with tears in her eyes, declared that she would not call at the Cedars; and it was not until Violet had with greater firmness vowed that she would go to the Cedars by herself rather than not at all that the good old lady had given in.

And when they had called and Mrs. Dodson had accepted the invitation for herself and two menfolk, Violet had still further worried her aunt by declaring that the Dodsons, though they were tallow-molders, were not snobs, and that for her part she saw nothing to find fault with in Mrs. Dodson save, perhaps, rather a redundancy of colour in her morning cap.

"Which, my dear aunt," Violet said, in conclusion, "is an error in taste not confined to tallow chandlers."

So there they are. Mr. Dodson, the father, a quiet, mild-eyed old gentleman, with a partiality for clear soup; Mrs. Dodson, a smiling, homely-looking lady, with a devouring admiration for her son; and the son, Mr. Leicester himself, with no particularly prominent virtues or vices save that of silence.

He had scarcely spoken a word during the soup and the fish, and Violet had almost made up her mind that he was too proud and unforgiving, and was prepared to dislike him, when suddenly he, looking across the table, met her questioning glance, and with a smile that dispelled his gravity or ill-humour as a mist evaporates before the mid-day sun, broke out into conversation.

Then Violet understands that he is no only heroic but amusing, that he is handsomer even than she had thought him, and that, above all, his manner, speech and bearing are those of a perfect gentleman.

The entrées are passed round and partaken of.

Mr. Leicester is describing the Vicani Pass to Miss Mildmay, and interesting her deeply therein.

Mrs. Dodson is comparing notes with Mrs. Mild-





[LOVE VERSUS DUTY.]

# ONLY COUNTRY LOVE.

BY  
CHARLES GARVIE,  
AUTHOR OF

*"Christmas Before and Behind the Curtain,"*  
*"Love's Christmas," etc., etc.*

## CHAPTER IX.

Courage, my comrades, we've all heard the old proverb:  
"The course of true love never did run smooth."  
O'er many a stone the stream fights on to ocean.

Buchanan.

"Go from my sight!" were the first harsh words poor Muriel had ever received from her father, and their anger and bitterness simply overwhelmed her. Mr. Leigh, who generally saw her from a distance tripping light-heartedly down to the meadow, and was cheered and lit up for the day by the sight, missed her the next morning, and the next. Then he grew alarmed and repaired to Goody's cottage.

"Was Miss Holt unwell?"

When he asked Jaffer threw back his head and laughed.

"What are you laughing at, Jaffer?" asked Leigh, more anxious than before, for it was well known that Jaffer always laughed heartiest at the most sorrowful events.

"He! He!" said Jaffer, "Miss Mur'l been a bad girl; the farmer he blow her up—blow her up like a bellows into her room upstairs, and she never came down again."

This was all that could be got, and Leigh, troubled and distressed, was fain to march off and see to his cows.

Soon after tidings reached him through a more reliable source.

Old William was trudging down the avenue shaking his head.

"What's the matter, Will?" asked Leigh, who knew every shifting expression on the weather-beaten face. "Anything wrong with the sheep?"

"No, Maester Wynter," replied the old man, "the sheep be all right; Heaven be praised; but I've just hearn that Miss Muriel—bless her pretty face!—is eadly like, and keeps t' her room."

"Where did you hear that?" asked Leigh, leaning on his stick and turning pale and red alternately.

"At t' farm; I met t' farmer comin' through the yard like a turkey-cock, all comb like. 'What's the matter with the maester?' says I. 'Oh,' says Bill Twaed, 'he be in a tautrum over Miss Muriel, as be ill indoors.'"

Leigh strode off without a word, making straight for Rubywood, and had not proceeded a couple of

hundred yards before he saw the farmer himself, who certainly justified old Will's queer simile.

"Good morning, sir," said Wynter, cordially, and striving to conceal the anxiety he felt.

"Good morning," said the farmer, rather shortly.

"I was coming up to Rubywood," said Wynter Leigh, "to inquire after Miss Holt; I trust she is not very unwell."

Something in his tone, the ring of almost feverish eagerness and earnestness, struck the farmer, and for a moment rendered him speechless.

Was this young fellow this new-comer, the cause of his hitherto dutiful daughter's disobedience and folly?

He looked at the handsome, earnest face, and his own grew suspicious and dark.

"My daughter's well, Mr. Leigh, and I'm obliged to you," he said, eyeing him keenly. "Though the gossipers seem to have laid her on a sick bed. She's well, sir—but I'm not sorry to see you, Mr. Leigh; I've wanted to ask you a question or two for some days, but you're a regular Will-o'-the-wisp, here and there, and over the land like a gust."

"I am always at home in the evening," said Leigh, quietly, adding, for naturally he wished to conciliate the man he desired for a father-in-law: "And I would have waited on you, Mr. Holt, had I known you wished to see me."

This simple piece of courtesy heightened the farmer's suspicion.

"Hem!" he said. "Well, I was going to ask you about the cattle; you're purchasing pretty heavy, Mr. Leigh."

"Rather," said Leigh, and his heart beat quickly. Could this be a favourable chance to show the farmer a glimpse of his hope?

"Rather!" repeated the farmer. "We don't call a hundred head 'rather' down south here, though you may think nothing of it up north, Mr. Leigh. What I wanted to know is whether you're going in for cattle heavier still. I daresay you may think it an impertinent question—young men are more uppish now than they used to be in my day—and wonder what business it is of mine."

"Indeed no," said Mr. Leigh, "I am only honoured by your interest in my affairs, Mr. Holt."

"Well, I'll tell you why I ask; you see that avenue Mr. Leigh? Unfortunately that's common property between us two, but I take a pride in that avenue, sir, my father did before me, and his father before him, and I should like to know if you think of driving three or four hundred head of cattle up and down that avenue, because if so—" He stopped, very red, very hot, and, as his enemies might have said, looking very pig-headed.

away, and Mr. Dodson is lost in the boancies of a curried fowl, when the butler, a model of solemn propriety, is approached by a footman, with whom he confers in stately but rather disturbed asides.

"What is it, James?" asks Mrs. Mildmay, who has noticed the conference.

"If you please, ma'am, a gentleman—"

But all explanation is rendered unnecessary by the opening of the door and the entrance of another servant, who says, with that clear sing-song proper for the occasion:

"Captain Howard Murpoint!" and stepping aside allows a tall, dark gentleman to pass through the doorway.

Conversation immediately ceases.

Dumbly hostess and guests regard the new-comer, dumbly still Mrs. Mildmay rises from her chair.

"Captain Murpoint!" she repeats.

"Captain Murpoint!" suddenly echoes Violet, whose quick, thoughtful eyes have been scanning the every feature of the dark, pale face, from its piercing black eye to the scar on its left cheek and its black moustache.

"Captain Murpoint!" she repeats, "my father's dearest friend!"

Captain Murpoint came forward with a smile, evidently struggling against emotion, and met her halfway, taking her outstretched hands, and looking with what might well pass for tear-dimmed eyes into her pure, youthful face.

"And you are John Mildmay's daughter!" he exclaims, in a tremulous voice. "Poor Jack, poor Jack!" and evidently overcome by the likeness or some memory of the past, Captain Murpoint, after wringing the girl's slight hand, conveys his own to his eyes and—weeps.

(To be continued.)

**THE LOUVRE LIBRARY.**—The restoration of the Louvre library is nearly finished; the sculptures have been repaired, the windows reglazed, and workmen are busily employed in fixing the leaden ornaments on the roof. It is expected that the building will be ready for the use of the Ministry of Finance in the spring.

**DECREASE OF LONGEVITY.**—Long life in Great Britain is on the decrease, and centenarians are much less frequent than forty years since, despite the increase of population. The two millions of population in the south-eastern counties produce 1,036 nonagenarians; but London, with a population of three and a quarter millions, can only muster 834 persons above the age of ninety, and Lancashire and Cheshire, with a similar aggregate population, 585.

"Nor I," said Violet. "So you see, they are not such dreadful characters after all. Poor people, I daresay they are as constantly deploring the nearness of the Park, and declaring that we spoil their view—which we certainly do."

"How absurd!" said Mrs. Mildmay. "Violet, I really believe you do not dislike them half so much as one would expect."

"Wicked as I am, I can't hate people I have never seen," Violet here laughingly replied.

And in like manner she always turned her aunt's disparagement of the Cedars aside, and contrived to say a word for the obnoxious individuals whom she had never seen.

This morning as she stood on the edge of the cliff, looking first out to sea and then at the sweet landscape, a smile rested for a moment upon her face, and her lips murmured:

"Poor auntie, if she could see the Cedars now! It looks as if the tallow which built it had caught fire. It makes me hotter than ever to look at it!"

And with a little flutter of her dainty handkerchief she seated herself upon the dried-up grass and turned her eyes seaward again.

As she sat thus she formed a picture beautiful enough to gladden the eyes of a Veronese in her glorious youth and loveliness, standing out in its cloud of airy muslin against the vividness of the summer sky.

Perhaps an individual slowly climbing the steep path behind her was of the same opinion, for he stopped in his laborious ascent and, baring his well-shaped head to the slight breeze, stood lost in an admiring reverie.

How long he would have indulged in his admiring observations it would be difficult to say, but his reverie was suddenly disturbed and his fixed regard turned aside in some confusion by the movement of Violet's head.

She had been watching a sea-gull and following the bird's progress with her eyes, and had suddenly become aware of the proximity of the stranger and of the fixed and admiring regard of his two dark eyes.

Almost too suddenly, for with something that nearly approached a start she half rose.

Regretting the movement before it was complete, she seated herself, and in so doing loosened her hold of the sunshade, which with the perversity of such things instantly took advantage of its freedom to sail over the cliff.

Violet sprang to her feet and thoughtlessly was about to peer over the precipice in search of it, but before she had reached the extreme edge she felt a strong hand upon her arm, and, turning with some astonishment, found herself face to face with the observant stranger.

For a moment they regarded each other in silence. It is worthy of notice how much and how acutely the eye can comprehend in so short a time.

Violet saw a handsome face tanned and moustached, a tall, lithe figure, to whose strength the grasp upon her arm bore witness, a pair of earnest, fearless eyes, and a mouth which might have been grave but for the smile which made it remarkably pleasant.

"Pray forgive me!" said the gentleman, removing his hat with his disengaged hand. "But have you fully considered the danger which attends a downward glance from this height?"

The tone was respectful, almost reverently so, but there were a dignity and a nameless music in it also that carried it even farther in one's liking.

Violet blushed like a school girl, as she would have expressed it, and without a word stepped back from the danger which she certainly had not considered, but which by the light of the gentleman's question was now fully revealed.

"I thank you very much," she said as his strong hand dropped from her arm and the stranger's face allowed itself to relax into a smile. "It was foolish and thoughtless, I," and she shuddered, "I might have fallen over. People have been known to, have they not?"

"Yes, a great many," he replied. "The strongest brain might be excused a sudden dizziness on the edge of such a precipice as this."

"Of course," assented Violet laughing, but very quietly. "I am so much obliged, I thought only of my stupid sunshade."

"Ah!" he said, quietly, "I had forgotten that. Perhaps it has lodged on one of the jutting bushes; if it is I may recover it for you," and he approached the edge.

Violet, who had not quite recovered from the shock which the sudden sense of her peril had produced, uttered a slight cry of warning and rebuke.

"Oh, please do not look over! It is of no consequence, not the slightest in the world."

The gentleman looked back at her alarmed face, then up at the blazing sun, and smiled significantly.

"It is of great consequence," he said, and before Violet could say another word to prevent him he had gained the edge and was upon his knees looking over.

"I can see it," he said, "and I think I can get it. The danger was not so great after all, there are one or two ledges here which will bear a man's weight, I should think, and below them is your sunshade."

While he was speaking he was cautiously but fearlessly lowering himself on to one of the ledges of which he had spoken, and Violet's horrified eyes lost first his legs, then his body, and last of all his good-looking face, as it disappeared below the edge.

Rooted to the spot with terror which she in vain struggled to suppress, Violet grew white as death and almost as cold.

At last her terror found utterance in a deep-drawn moan.

"Oh! come back! Please come back! I am sure you will be killed! It is horrible! Do come back!"

While she was still entreating and commanding the handsome, careless face arose above the surface again, and with slow, cautious movements the stranger, with the recovered sunshade in his hand, was beside her.

Violet drew a long breath of relief, and then with a smile that was better than all the thanks in the world said:

"I won't thank you, for I think you were more foolish than even I. You said it was dangerous to look over and you actually went over! And all for this stupid, worthless thing." And she shook the sunshade with annoyance.

"Not altogether for the sunshade," said the gentleman, smiling again. "But I am glad I have got it for you, and I assure you the danger was less than I at first imagined it; indeed for me there was no danger. I am blessed with a steady nerve, and have had some experience in mountaineering."

Violet looked down, and then up at his calm face.

"It was very good and kind of you," she said, "and I will thank you after all, I think." Then she made a movement, which he took in intimation that he might say good-day, and, accordingly, he raised his hat—or rather would have done so had not the wind saved him the trouble.

"How provoking!" said Violet, looking after the hat as it sailed over the cliff, in imitation of the sunshade. "I am afraid there is a fatality about this spot. I do hope you will not go down after it too!"

"No, indeed!" he said, with a light, pleasant laugh, "my hat is really of no consequence—"

"Oh! but of more than my parasol! You have nothing to protect your head, and the sun is quite as hot as it was five minutes ago." And she smiled naively.

"True," he said. "But my head is used to scorching, in fact rather likes it."

"You must take my sunshade," said Violet, with provoking gravity.

"No, thank you," he said, imitating the gravity and suppressing the smile. "I do not dread the sunstroke, and I have but a few steps to go," nodding to the blazing Cedars.

Violet was guilty of an unmistakable start.

"The Cedars!" she exclaimed, extending her beautiful eyes to their widest, "but you are not—" and she paused as if absolutely too astonished to conclude the sentence.

"My name is Leicester Dodson," said the gentleman, a slight but not imperceptible reserve showing upon his face and in the tone of his voice as he spoke.

"Mr. Dodson's son!" said Violet, slowly, as if the intelligence were too astonishing to be taken in instant.

The gentleman bowed.

"Mr. Dodson's and Mrs. Dodson's son," he said, with a smile.

For a moment Violet stood still, then her face lit up with its delicious smile, and, with a frank gesture, she held out her hand.

"Then we are neighbours," she said, as Mr. Leicester Dodson, with as much surprise as his courtesy would allow his face to express, took the well-shaped little hand. "I am Miss Mildmay."

Mr. Leicester dropped her hand as if it had grown red-hot and had burnt him. Violet coloured then, but understood his gesture of repudiation instantly.

"He knows how aunt dislikes his people and is sorry he rescued my sunshade," she thought.

"I am happy to have been of some slight service to you, Miss Mildmay," he said, coldly, with a careless but distant bow; then he turned and walked slowly down the steep path.

Violet, looking down after him until his bare head had dropped slowly out of sight, then said, audibly:

"Well, that is pride now; but it is proper pride, I think," smiled rather sadly, and returned homewards.

"Aunt!" she said, coming into the drawing-room just before dinner was served, and more quietly than was her wont, "I've had an adventure on the cliffs, startling and melodramatic. My sunshade blew over, and a gentleman was polite enough to go after it."

"My dear!" exclaimed the old lady, thinking it one of her darling's jokes.

"It's true, aunt. A stranger risked his neck—precious, no doubt, to himself and family—for a fifteen-and-sixpenny sunshade. Imprudent but heroic, was it not?"

"Very good and kind, but imprudent as you say, my dear. Young men are so rash!"

"This one was not," said Violet, picking at the costly fringe on her dress, "he was as calm and cool as—as a cucumber."

"A stranger," said Mrs. Mildmay, smiling. "Whom can it be, I wonder? Somebody staying at the Wenningfords, no doubt."

"Aunt!" said Violet, then suddenly changing the subject, "do not the vicar and his wife dine with us on Saturday?"

"Yes, my dear, and I have asked Mr. and Mrs. Giles. The vicar is a dear, good man, but—"

"Rather a bore," put in Violet, decidedly.

Mrs. Mildmay looked shocked, but Violet, without waiting for a reprimand, went on, with slow and most unusual gravity:

"Do you know, aunt, I should like to ask this heroic gentleman of mine?"

"A perfect stranger, my dear!" said Mrs. Mildmay, with a smile.

"Yes, a perfect stranger, but a gentleman. Perfect strangers who are gentlemen, and heroic enough to risk their lives for one's sunshade, are people worth knowing. Aunt, ask him. He is tall, staying at dark, golden-brown you know, nice eyes, a yellow moustache, and—I think that's all I remember—I was going to mention the smile, but of course he may not always wear that."

"I don't remember him, my dear," said Mrs. Mildmay. "But if you really want to know him, I'll try and find out who he is from the servants."

"And ask him to dinner?" urged Violet.

Mrs. Mildmay looked bewildered and puzzled.

"Yes, my dear, if you wish it, and he really belongs to the Wenningfords."

"I do wish it, aunt," said Violet. "But he doesn't belong to the Wenningfords. He belongs to the Cedars, and is no other than Mr. Leicester Dodson, the tallow melter's son!"

It is Saturday evening, and Mrs. Mildmay's little dinner is in good progress.

There are the vicar and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Giles from the Ferns, and, wonderful to say, the Dodsons from the Cedars.

Miss Violet had, as usual, had her way with her aristocratic aunt, and the Dodsons are here.

For a whole day Mrs. Mildmay, with tears in her eyes, declared that she would not call at the Cedars; and it was not until Violet had with greater firmness vowed that she would go to the Cedars by herself rather than not at all that the good old lady had given in.

And when they had called and Mrs. Dodson had accepted the invitation for herself and two monies, Violet had still further worried her aunt by declaring that the Dodsons, though they were tallow-melters, were not snobs, and that for her part she saw nothing to find fault with in Mrs. Dodson save, perhaps, rather a redundancy of colour in her morning cap.

"Which, my dear aunt," Violet said, in conclusion, "is an error in taste not confined to tallow chandlers."

So there they are. Mr. Dodson, the father, a quiet, mild-eyed old gentleman, with a partiality for clear soap; Mrs. Dodson, a smiling, homely-looking lady, with a devouring admiration for her son; and the son, Mr. Leicester himself, with no particularly prominent virtues or vices save that of silence.

He had scarcely spoken a word during the soup and the fish, and Violet had almost made up her mind that he was too proud and unforgiving, and was prepared to dislike him, when suddenly he, looking across the table, met her questioning glance, and with a smile that dispelled his gravity or ill-humour as a mist evaporates before the mid-day sun, broke out into conversation.

Then Violet understands that he is no only heroic but amusing, that he is handsomer even than she had thought him, and that, above all, his manner, speech and bearing are those of a perfect gentleman.

The entrées are passed round and partaken of.

Mr. Leicester is describing the Vicari Pass to Miss Mildmay, and interesting her deeply therein.

Mrs. Dodson is comparing notes with Mrs. Mild-





[LOVE VERSUS DUTY.]

# ONLY COUNTRY LOVE.

BY CHARLES GARVIE,

AUTHOR OF

"Christmas Before and Behind the Curtain,"  
"Love's Christmas," etc., etc.

## CHAPTER IX.

Courage, my comrades, we've all heard the old proverb:

"The course of true love never did run smooth."

O'er many a stone the stream fights on to ocean.

Buchanan.

"Go from my sight!" were the first harsh words poor Muriel had ever received from her father, and their anger and bitterness simply overwhelmed her.

Mr. Leigh, who generally saw her from a distance tripping light-heartedly down to the meadow, and was cheered and lit up for the day by the sight, missed her the next morning, and the next. Then he grew alarmed and repaired to Goody's cottage.

"Was Miss Holt unwell?"

When he asked Jaffer throw back his head and laughed.

"What are you laughing at, Jaffer?" asked Leigh, more anxious than before, for it was well known that Jaffer always laughed heartiest at the most sorrowful events.

"He! He!" said Jaffer, "Miss Mur' been a bad girl; the farmer he blow her up—blow her up like a bellows into her room upstairs, and she never came down again."

This was all that could be got, and Leigh, troubled and distressed, was fain to march off and see to his cows.

Soon after tidings reached him through a more reliable source.

Old William was trudging down the avenue shaking his head.

"What's the matter, Will?" asked Leigh, who knew every shifting expression on the weather-beaten face. "Anything wrong with the sheep?"

"No, Maester Wynter," replied the old man, "the sheep be all right; Heaven be praised; but I've just heard that Miss Muriel—bless her pretty face!—is sadly like, and keeps 'er room."

"Where did you hear that?" asked Leigh, leaning on his stick and turning pale and red alternately.

"At 't' farm; I met 't' farmer coomin' through the yard like a turkey-cock, all comb like. 'What's the matter with the maester?' says I. 'Oh,' says Bill Twaed, 'he be in a tautrum over Miss Muriel, as be ill indoors.'"

Leigh strode off without a word, making straight for Rubywood, and had not proceeded a couple of

hundred yards before he saw the farmer himself, who certainly justified old Will's queer simile.

"Good morning, sir," said Wynter, cordially, and striving to conceal the anxiety he felt.

"Good morning," said the farmer, rather shortly.

"I was coming up to Rubywood," said Wynter Leigh, "to inquire after Miss Holt; I trust she is not very unwell."

Something in his tone, the ring of almost feverish eagerness and earnestness, struck the farmer, and for a moment rendered him speechless.

Was this young fellow this new-comer, the cause of his hitherto dutiful daughter's disobedience and folly?

He looked at the handsome, earnest face, and his own grew suspicious and dark.

"My daughter's well, Mr. Leigh, and I'm obliged to you," he said, eyeing him keenly. "Though the gossips seem to have laid her on a sick bed. She's well, sir—but I'm not sorry to see you, Mr. Leigh; I've wanted to ask you a question or two for some days, but you're a regular Will-o'-the-wisp, here and there, and over the land like a gnat."

"I am always at home in the evening," said Leigh, quietly, adding, for naturally he wished to conciliate the man he desired for a father-in-law: "And I would have waited on you, Mr. Holt, had I known you wished to see me."

This simple piece of courtesy heightened the farmer's suspicion.

"Hem!" he said. "Well, I was going to ask you about the cattle; you're purchasing pretty heavy, Mr. Leigh."

"Rather," said Leigh, and his heart beat quickly. Could this be a favourable chance to show the farmer a glimpse of his hope?

"Rather!" repeated the farmer. "We don't call a hundred head 'rather' down south here, though you may think nothing of it up north, Mr. Leigh. What I wanted to know is whether you're going in for cattle heavier still. I daresay you may think it an impatient question—young men are more uppish now than they used to be in my day—and wonder what business it is of mine."

"Indeed no," said Mr. Leigh, "I am only honoured by your interest in my affairs, Mr. Holt."

"Well, I'll tell you why I ask; you see that avenue Mr. Leigh? Unfortunately that's common property between us two, but I take a pride in that avenue, sir, my father did before me, and his father before him, and I should like to know if you think of driving three or four hundred head of cattle up and down that avenue, because if so—" He stopped, very red, very hot, and, as his enemies might have said, looking very pig-headed.

away, and Mr. Dodson is lost in the beauties of a curried fowl, when the butler, a model of solemn propriety, is approached by a footman, with whom he confers in stately but rather disturbed asides.

"What is it, James?" asks Mrs. Mildmay, who has noticed the conference.

"If you please, ma'am, a gentleman—"

But all explanation is rendered unnecessary by the opening of the door and the entrance of another servant, who says, with that clear sing-song proper for the occasion:

"Captain Howard Murpoint!" and stepping aside allows a tall, dark gentleman to pass through the doorway.

Conversation immediately ceases.

Dumbly hostess and guests regard the new-comer, dumbly still Mrs. Mildmay rises from her chair.

"Captain Murpoint!" she repeats.

"Captain Murpoint!" suddenly echoes Violet, whose quick, thoughtful eyes have been scanning the every feature of the dark, pale face, from its piercing black eye to the scar on its left cheek and its black moustache.

"Captain Murpoint!" she repeats, "my father's dearest friend!"

Captain Murpoint came forward with a smile, evidently struggling against emotion, and met her halfway, taking her outstretched hands, and looking with what might well pass for tear-dimmed eyes into her pure, youthful face.

"And you are John Mildmay's daughter!" he exclaims, in a tremulous voice. "Poor Jack, poor Jack!" and evidently overcome by the likeness or some memory of the past, Captain Murpoint, after wringing the girl's slight hand, conveys his own to his eyes and—wheeps.

(To be continued.)

**THE LOUVRE LIBRARY.**—The restoration of the Louvre library is nearly finished; the sculptures have been repaired, the windows reglazed, and workmen are busily employed in fixing the leaden ornaments on the roof. It is expected that the building will be ready for the use of the Ministry of Finance in the spring.

**DECREASE OF LONGEVITY.**—Long life in Great Britain is on the decrease, and centenarians are much less frequent than forty years since, despite the increase of population. The two millions of population in the south-eastern counties produce 1,088 nonagenarians; but London, with a population of three and a quarter millions, can only muster 834 persons above the age of ninety, and Lancashire and Cheshire, with a similar aggregate population, 585.

Wynter Leigh's colour rose for an instant. No man had ever spoken to him before like this in his life.

He looked hard at the old farmer, then, quietly, slowly and earnestly, said:

"Farmer Holt, I answer your question as candidly as it was propounded. I do not intend purchasing any more cattle, simply because I have no further capital with which to do it; but, if I had, I still should refrain from doing so because I would sacrifice more than you can imagine to gain your goodwill and esteem. As to the avenue, if any other road can be made by which the cattle can reach pastorage, it shall be made, and in return for so small a matter I venture to ask a favour."

"What's that?" asked the farmer, not at all propitiated by the generous offer.

"Only this," said Leigh, "that if there be any other matter which may give you pain or annoyance and which I can relieve, that you will instantly inform me of it. I am a bad neighbour so far as sociability goes, Mr. Holt, but I am heartily anxious to prove myself a good one by seizing any opportunity of removing anything on the farm or about it that may inconvenience you or give you trouble."

The farmer, taking all this as confirmation of his suspicion, grasped his stick and nodded grimly.

"Oh, I thank you, but I'm not a man to take advantage of fine words. I wish you good morning, Mr. Leigh," and, with a touch of his broad-brimmed hat, he trudged off.

Leigh, with a pained look on his countenance, turned and strode towards the Holmes.

Muriel, his beautiful, true-hearted Muriel, was not ill, that was a great relief to him, but there was something wrong nevertheless, and as he strode on, wondering what it could be, he heard a horse's tramp, looked up and solved the problem in a moment. Before him was Mr. Heatherbridge's gray mare, and on her was the young squire himself, with a gloomy brow and downcast eyes.

Leigh gave him good morning quietly. Mr. Heatherbridge started from his reverie, saw whence the salutation proceeded, and with an angry flush put the mare to a trot and rode by without any response.

Leigh stared after him and then smiled.

"Soh," he said, "my darling! that is the mystery, is it? My friend would carry you off by force of arms, and the old man would help him by force of will. Poor Muriel! also poor Wynter too, for how can my sweet darling have strength enough to resist her father and the wealthy squire?"

Then he entered his comfortable house, made a pretence of eating his solitary meal, and, striding up and down the worm-eaten but still polished floor, thought over his love.

Absence makes the heart grow fonder, if true love has once thrilled it, and Wynter Leigh's heart beat with the truest love man ever felt for the beautiful girl who had crept into its aching void and filled it with sweetness and consolation.

"I have read of love," he muttered, "and have laughed as I have read. Could such heart-burnings, such longings, such intolerable pain at separation be natural? Ah! I endure them all now, and I know that love such as I feel cannot be ever painted; it is indescribable. My darling, gentle-hearted Muriel, I would die to make you happy, ay, die the worst of deaths if it could purchase you an hour's joy! But I will do better; I will live to make you happy. Six months, I said—it seems an age, an intolerable eternity; and I cannot see her, meet her face to face and speak no word of the love that trembles on my lips, and flies to my eyes. I must stand by and see her battered by the wealthy lover and harassed by the father, and refrain from one word of comfort; stand with my arms folded while I burn to clasp her within them to my heart, and snatch her from them both! Six months! It will be harvest; the land is turning out better than I expected. I will keep my promise; the Leighs do not break faith though their hearts may break under the restraint. With the corn in, and all things, please Heaven, prospering, I will go and beg for her, ay, beg for her as the starving man begs for his life."

The resolve made, he would keep it, but it was hard to be firm, for he was tried.

In the first place he saw nothing of Muriel—for a very good reason—Farmer Holt, having taken his suddenly formed suspicion to his heart, had tramped off straight from Leigh and turned the key in Muriel's door, so that she was a prisoner, and could see no more of her lover than a distant view of his stalwart figure through the latticed window, and even that scarcely for her tears.

Secondly, Leigh made the discovery that the attitude of those about him had changed most suddenly and strangely.

Squire Heatherbridge had cut him on the road and now his own men showed disinclination to work

for him. Three men came up and gave him notice early in the morning following that of his meeting with the farmer.

Before noon four others had followed suit. Leigh was surrounded.

"What have you to complain of, my man?" he asked. "Is it more money you want?"

"No, Master Leigh," stammered the spokesman. "Have you found me so hard a master that my service is unendurable?" said Leigh, sternly.

The men shook their heads and murmured denial in concert.

"What is it then?" asked the master, eyeing them suspiciously and keenly.

"Well, you see, sir," said the spokesman, shifting about uneasily and twisting his hat. "We be all tenants of the young squire's, and when he's got a lot of work and he wants hands why, ye see, we be bound to go, wheresoever we do happen to be, and—"

"Lot of work!" repeated Leigh. "What work can Mr. Heatherbridge have now?"

The men looked at each other in silence. Leigh nodded scornfully.

"I understand, my men," he said, "you may go."

And he did understand and marvel.

"All is fair in love and war," he muttered. "So Mr. Heatherbridge would ruin the rival whom he considers more favoured than himself. Fair! it is no English and foot!"

Four or not, it harassed and distressed him.

He had a heavy stock on the farm and plenty of work, but Mr. Heatherbridge did his spiritings so thoroughly that before the next morning there remained to his rival three servants only, old William, whom he had engaged in another county, and a boy.

Leigh set his face sternly to overcome this difficulty, and started off in his dog-cart to Hopwood.

There he engaged six men at good wages, and brought three of them over with him.

When they had all arrived and were sitting in the common kitchen after three days' work he addressed them, gravely, but kindly:

"My men," he said, "I have reason to believe that before to-morrow night you will be tempted by a neighbour to leave my service. He may offer you higher wages, he may, and very probably will, put some more powerful agency at work to attain his object. What is your intention? Will you stand by me and act like Englishmen, or will you give in and desert me if you are tempted?"

"We'll stand by you, Master Leigh!" said one of them, and the rest echoed the assertion.

Wynter Leigh nodded.

"Good," he said; "you will not find me a hard master, and you'll find me a staunch one. Sam, give out some cyder."

This precaution taken, Leigh went through the business of the day with a stouter heart, but a sad one still, for he could get no tidings of Muriel.

No one had seen her, and the farmer kept so close a watch about the farm that the servants could glean nothing.

At night, tramping down the avenue tired of foot and heart, the young lover pulled up short at the apparition of the white frock and the pretty face of Janey, Farmer Holt's servant.

"Is that you, Janey?" he said.

"Yes, sir," replied Janey, coming from behind the trees and looking round furtively. "Oh, sir," and she put her natty apron to her eyes.

"Well, be quick, my girl," said Leigh, with a sharpness produced by his love. "I'm on thorns you can see. You come from your mistress?"

"Yes, sir," said Janey, crying. "Poor, dear Miss Muriel, isn't it a shame, sir, that the prettiest young lady in the county should be shut up like a prisoner in the Tower of Lunnod, all for a tiresome man?"

"A prisoner!" said Leigh, with quiet indignation. "Is she really a prisoner, my lass?" and his lips compressed tightly.

"That she be, sir," said Janey, "and it's enough to melt a stone to see the sweet dear sitting by the window so pale and quiet. Oh, Mr. Leigh, you be a very fortunate gentleman."

Leigh nodded inquiringly.

"To think as Miss Muriel should refuse so many and fall in love with you. She do love you too, sir, for she sits at the window and watches you, and I can see when you be coming or go, as well as she can, a'most, by her sweet face. Oh, Mr. Leigh, what's to be done?"

Leigh sat down on the fence and looked hard at the ground.

If he followed the desire of his heart he knew what would be done and that without the loss of a moment. He would have given ten years from his life to gratify that desire, and that desire was to walk off straight to the farm, liberate the woman he loved, and carry her off in spite of twenty fathers or rivals.

But he had given his word, and so sat silent and torn by passionate love and passionate indignation.

"And if you please, sir, Miss Muriel sent me to go for a walk: she's so thoughtful, sir, and couldn't let me be cooped up in a close room though she were obliged to be, and so I wait till it was dusk and creeps down here, hoping to see you, Mr. Leigh; and if you please, sir, I do think as master intends sending Miss Muriel far away into Lunnod or somewhere, for I see him writing a letter, and George—" here Janey blushed—"George did say as it were addressed to Miss Muriel's aunt, as in a great lady and lives in Lunnod. And, oh, sir, if she be sent away 'till break her heart, I know."

Leigh passed his hand across his brow, harassed and tortured almost beyond endurance.

"Did—did your mistress give you no message?" he asked, in a low voice, thirsting for a word from his darling.

"Well, no," hesitated Janey. "She didn't give me any message, but just as I was going out of the room she plucked this forget-me-not out of the bunch of flowers on the table and gave it me without a word, sir."

Leigh almost smothered it from her hand and pressed it to his lips, then, in a hurried, agitated voice, for the little flower stirred his earnest heart to its very depths, he said:

"Janey, tell her that I sleep with her gift upon my heart, and that until that heart ceases to beat I cannot forget her. Tell her—There, go, my girl, go, go!" and, unable to utter a word more, he strode off.

"Well," said Janey, "if this ain't love I don't know what love is. Law! to think of Mr. Leigh loving my dear Miss Muriel like that! One wouldn't a thought of it him—so quiet and grave as looks."

Day passed after day and Muriel was still at Hopwood, though the severity of her confinement had somewhat relaxed, and she was allowed to go as far as the garden and the court, but then only at stated times, when her father, whom she had not seen nor spoken to since the night of her refusal of young Heatherbridge, sat in the parlour, the window of which commanded a view of the whole space, and kept watch and guard over her.

He would have sent her to London, but the aunt to whom he had written was away on a visit, and so he had to be contented with a sharp surveillance, and, determined that he would break her spirit, and cure her of her fully and obstinacy, resolved that she should be kept a prisoner until she acknowledged her crime and consented to take the husband he had chosen for her.

Harvest time approached.

Wynter Leigh, who had prospered in all matters save that of his love, grew more anxious, more stern, and more passionately in love with the absent Muriel than ever, and as the expiration of the six months' term of silence and patience drew near was almost consumed with fiery resolves and impossible projects.

The little forget-me-not, faded and dead, slept on his heart night and day.

The harvest came.

Men were scarce; all that were obtainable Mr. Heatherbridge and Farmer Holt secured.

Worn to death with overwork and anxiety, Wynter Leigh rode over to Hopwood and determined to give the new steam monster a trial.

Farmer Holt, trudging from a newly reaped field to one in progress, met the great steam monster panting and snorting down the avenue, which Leigh, having been far too cooped up to cut a new road, had been compelled to retain in use.

"What's that?" gasped the farmer, staring first at the immense locomotive and then at the deep rut which its broad, heavy wheels cut in the even road.

"That be the new invention, farmer," replied old Will, cheerily, and not without a grim satisfaction at the farmer's dismay. "That be four-and-twenty men rolled into iron and stuck upon wheels."

"And—and what's your master going to do with it?" asked the farmer, his anger rising rapidly into a fit of passion.

"Reap," retorted old Will. "There's a Providence always waiting to open a new door when contrary men shut all the old un's, Farmer Holt."

And with a stern nod the old man trudged on after the new hands.

Farmer Holt strode home purple with anger.

Muriel, sitting under the shade of an old oak in the courtyard, saw him approaching, and, expecting him to turn off up the side walk to avoid her, drooped her head to hide the tear-dimmed eyes, and sighed.

But the farmer, eyeing his daughter angrily, strode straight on, and, standing before her, folded his arms, and said:

"Muriel Holt, have your repeated of your wickedness?"

"Oh, father, father, dear father, you will break



my heart!" sobbed Muriel, throwing herself upon his breast.

He put her back with a rough hand. "Answer my question, girl. Are you ready to do your duty and obey the man who gave you life? Will you marry Alfred Heatherbridge?"

"Father," said Muriel, pale but resolute, "I cannot—I dare not."

"Cannot! dare not! Why not?" asked the father, his eyes flashing. "Don't answer, you shameless girl, I'll answer for you. You love another man. Do you deny it?"

"No!" said Muriel, raising her face with a light in her eyes that might have been the reflection of his. "I do love another man—a brave, true-hearted man, who would scorn to do what the man you would have me marry has meanly done to him."

Farmer Holt drew his breath, and his arms, which he had fixed across his chest, tightened.

"Your true-hearted man is Master Leigh, my girl, isn't it?" he asked, with terrible calmness.

"It is he," said Muriel, in a low but clear voice.

"Then, Muriel Holt, I tell you I'd rather follow you to your grave than give you to that man. Master Leigh! An insolent, half-brained fool! No daughter of mine shall marry him, for I'd bury her first. And that's my answer, my girl, if ever you dare to put the question. Marry the man I've chosen for you or remain single. When I say a thing I mean it, and by Heaven I'll stand to this!"

Muriel sank upon the seat white as death, and almost as breathless.

The farmer glanced at her with a pitiless nod and strode away.

# CHAPTER X.

Oh, I have set my all upon a die  
And lost the cast! Tell me no more  
Of woman's love.

*Palmer.*

MURIEL, having herself made the declaration of their mutual love, which she had made her lover promise he would keep secret, lost no time in despatching Janey with a message.

It was short but wondrously eloquent.

"Tell him, Janey," she said, with a sad little smile, "that I have been very wicked and have ruined us both, and that I do not deserve that he should keep his promise."

Janey started with the message, but the farmer was one too many for them.

He caught her at the gate and, without beating round the bush, went straight to the point.

"You're going with a message to Mr. Leigh, my lass," he said, sternly. "I don't want to know what it is and I don't care, but if you pass that garden gate you'll never come through it again while I'm master of Rubywood. Now go back to your mistress and tell her she hasn't a fool for a father."

Quite unconscious of the scene that had taken place between the farmer and his daughter Wynter Leigh, with "Muriel" ringing in his ears and Muriel's face ever before his wistful eyes, got through his reaping, paid the engine fee, and started on his night's round of inspection, which he never so weary he never neglected.

As he passed the window which he knew was Muriel's he raised his hand to his lips and murmured a blessing on his love, and then, fired by her nearness, resolved inwardly that by hook or by crook he would see her on the morrow and be released from his promise.

He was a man, he loved most passionately, and his patient endurance was getting intolerable.

Alas, that morrow! When he awoke at sunrise and had eaten his frugal breakfast he strode down to his outhouses to look at his cows.

His man, Anderson, a quiet, almost sullen-tempered fellow, was standing looking at a beast that stood leaning against the stall as if it were lame.

"What's the matter, Anderson?" asked Leigh.

"Nothin'," replied the man. "She's knocked her leg against the stall."

Leigh was on his knees in a moment.

"Turn her round," he said, in his short way.

The man obeyed, and the cow, in a weak, trembling way, turned round.

"Knocked her leg?" repeated Leigh, doubtfully.

"Yes," said the man. "I seed her do it."

That settled it of course, and Leigh, telling him to bathe it with cold water, strode off.

In an hour or two he returned, and, walking by the meadow way, was surprised and startled to see another cow limping weakly across the grass.

He went up to it and looked at it. It was running at the mouth, and seemed lame. It called the man who was at work in a distant part of the field, and pointed out the marks of distress.

"Ah," said the fellow, "staggers."

"Not it," said Leigh, curiously. "I know staggers when I see them, my man. This is not staggers nor anything I've seen before. Fetch the vet."

"He's away at Hopwood," said the man, gruffly, "and we don't want him. I'll take her home and doctor her."

Leigh hesitated, but the man, who had been used to cows from boyhood, looked and spoke so confidently that he fell back and allowed him to drive the cow home.

A step behind him, and the postboy ran up.

Leigh opened the letter, which proved to be one from his uncle, and was as stern in form and manner as the uncle himself.

"DEAR WYNTER—A call of business, unexpected but urgent, may necessitate my requesting the return of the three thousand pounds which I lent you. I trust you will be prepared should I do so, and I write this early that you may not be inconvenienced."

"I am, yours faithfully,

"ARTHUR LEIGH."

Wynter Leigh's face fell, and he took off his hat. "A borrower is a slave," he muttered. "What am I to do? He will have the money if he needs it, though it were carved from my skin. I know him. Oh, Muriel, Muriel, fate is erecting a fresh mountain between you and me for every old one I pull down."

Musing thus sadly, he came across the farmer.

He raised his hat with his earnest, kindly smile, but the old man stared him grimly in the face and tramped on without the slightest sign of recognition.

Leigh smiled almost as grimly, and quickened his pace.

"One heart is as good as another," he murmured, "and yours is as well able to bear a shock as mine. I'll wait no longer or both my darling's and mine will be broken."

He turned the corner, and saw old William running towards him as fast as he could, with fear, distress and agitation as plainly portrayed on his countenance as the figures are on the dial of St. Paul's.

"Oh, Master Leigh, Master Leigh, the plague be upon us! Heaven is a visiting us."

"What is the matter?" asked Leigh, sternly.

"Come to the yard, Master Leigh, come to the yard!" said the old man, and as Leigh hurried on he followed after.

In the yard all was confusion. A crowd was collected round a group of cows, twenty in number, who were lying as if stricken for death.

Leigh forced his way through the outer edge and grasped the veterinary surgeon's arm.

"What ails them?" he said, in a low, deep voice.

Mr. Muddock rose from his knees, on which he had been examining a cow's head, and scratched his own.

"I'm blest if I know, sir," he replied, his face full of bewilderment and concern. "I can't make out none of the symptoms. It's this 'ere lameness that puzzles me. I've give 'em draughts, and I've bled some on 'em, but it's all no use. Look there! by the Heavens above there's one dead!" and he sprang to one beast that with pitious bellowing fell over as dead as a stone.

Leigh stood and glanced round stupefied and dumbfounded. But only for the moment, the next he turned to one of the men and in an unnaturally calm voice said:

"Saddle the mare and ride to Wodenhead. Bring Mr. Williams, the surgeon, here without the loss of a moment. Don't spare the horse."

As he spoke two more cows were brought in, and the vet turned with a confused, helpless air to examine them.

In half an hour Mr. Williams galloped into the yard.

He shook hands hurriedly with Wynter, and was on his knees beside the cow last seized.

Leigh watched his face intently, and groaned as he turned it up full of dark meaning.

"Speak out, man," said Leigh, "I'm not a child."

"Mr. Leigh," said the surgeon, "they're down with this new disease, the cattle plague. It's highly infectious, and—upon my soul I'm afraid you'll lose them. Got all the men and have these stricken ones removed; they taint the very air they breathe. Look here! By Heaven, there are five more!" and as he spoke he pointed to a small crowd driving a fresh batch of victims.

Leigh threw off his coat and worked like a slave. The men, cheered and encouraged by his example, toiled away in the hot sun, and separated the stricken cattle from those not yet attacked.

Then, when the yard was clear save the piles of faggots which the surveyor had ordered to be burnt as disinfectants, Leigh stood with folded arms to contemplate his approaching ruin.

His eyes turned towards Rubywood, his heart sank within him, and with a groan he hid his face in his hands.

That night he passed amongst the dead and dying cattle, listening with numb ears to the gossip of his men, which ran upon the hideous disease which had

just been introduced into England, and by which their master's cows had been destroyed.

In the morning, as if to put the finishing stroke to his misfortune, came a second letter from the north.

Terribly abrupt, it was a sentence of ruin without compromise.

"DEAR WYNTER," it ran, "I wrote to you a week ago informing you that in all probability I should require the repayment of the three thousand pounds. Having received no reply, I forward this to remind you that I hold your note agreeing to pay on demand, and to intimate that as my want of the money is urgent my agent will call upon you to-morrow to receive payment or take the necessary steps to enforce the bond."

"I am yours,

"ARTHUR LEIGH."

With the note in his hand Leigh sank into a chair, staring straight before him like one demented.

A week ago! Yes, on referring to the first letter he saw that his precise uncle had made no mistake, the letter bore the date of a week back, and had evidently been mislaid. To-morrow the agent—one who could not accept any compromise, and who would inevitably carry out his instructions to the letter, and would enforce the bond—would be on the scene.

Where could he look for help? Nowhere—he had no friend. Not one save old Will sitting in the sunshine bowed down by the shock of his young master's misfortunes.

No friend! Ah, yes, one, and he knew in his heart that, come what would, she, his beautiful, gentle-hearted Muriel, would be true to him, and that though the years of separation might be long and bitter she was his to all eternity.

He threw the letter aside, and drawing paper and ink towards him, in his firm hand, which no amount of distress could rob of its steadiness, wrote as his heart dictated.

"MY DARLING,—I may call you mine now, for if I have not you I have nothing, Providence having seen fit to deprive me of all earthly possessions. Buoyed up by the hope your sweet lips gave me I have striven and battled with fortune, for the greatest prize ever man fought for. Man fights, but Heaven awards the victory where it wills. I have lost the battle, and as I write to you now am a ruined man. In this, which must be the darkest hour of my life but for you, I turn like a drowning man to my love, my star, my hope. Muriel, will you still pledge me your love?—will you still give your heart to a penniless, homeless wretch? Wretch, indeed, for asking you, but, oh, my darling, I love you so that I cannot—I cannot give you up without one prayer!

"I implore you to act as you think right, but, for Heaven's sweet sake, have mercy on me! Send me one word to say that I may still hope—that you will not take your love from me because Heaven has taken everything else. Be merciful, Muriel, and send me word to lighten the darkness which has fallen upon me. I have kept my promise; now, though I am still more unworthy of your love than ever, I implore you to keep the promise which your eyes gave me. And yet—and yet—I know, selfish wretch that I am! that I have no right to ask you for your love or your pledge—nay, that it is cowardly, unmanly, to do so. Send me no word, Muriel, but let the messenger go without a sign from you that I may know you will be happy with some better man, and forget that one Wynter Leigh ever loved you or crossed your path. Farewell, dear Muriel, no longer mine; Heaven's blessing rest upon you night and day."

"WYNTER LEIGH."

He dared not read the cold words after he had written them, but, with his lips tightly set, walked down to Old Goody's and called Jaffer from the cottage.

"Jaffer," he said, "you can climb the court wall at Rubywood?"

"Ees," said Jaffer, laughing with ecstatic glee.

"You are a clever fellow, Jaffer," said Leigh, with a sad smile. "Can you take this note to Miss Muriel where she sits in the court without any one seeing you giving it to her?"

"I think I can, Maester Leigh," said Jaffer, with another guffaw.

Leigh gave him the note and a shilling.

"I can trust you, Jaffer," he said, "because you are quicker than people think, and you love Miss Muriel, don't you?"

"That I do," said Jaffer, "and so do you, don't you, Maester Leigh?"

And Jaffer roared with enjoyment.

"Ay," said Leigh, solemnly. "There do run off. Remember, you are to take the note without any one seeing you, and you are to run back to me and tell me if Miss Muriel says anything to you—word for word, Jaffer—and then there will be another shilling for you."

Jaffer laughed more heartily than before, seized the note, secured it in some complicated corner of his fustian coat, and, looking slyly up the lane to see if the coast was clear, started off.

Leigh looked after him with a fast-beating heart. "Have I said farewell to all the world holds dear to me? If so, I have said farewell to hope. I love her with all my heart—all my life—and if I have lost her life is over for me. What will she say? Will she send the answer I was craven enough to implore of her? Oh, shame on me! I ought to have crept out of the world rather than ask her for her love—a penniless adventurer—homeless, friendless! Ah, but I love her so—I love her so!—And that is where love makes us weak. Will she send the word? Will she send me a note?"

Asking himself this one question, he paced up and down the lane, each moment growing more excited and feverish.

The boy seemed to have been gone hours already, though Leigh knew that he could not yet have reached Rubywood.

Agnes seemed to pass and then he saw Jaffer's long, awkward figure swinging across the fields at a jog trot.

The strong man's heart beat so fast that it almost stopped his breath.

Jaffer came on, and halted before him breathless, but chuckling with satisfaction.

"Well?" said Leigh, almost devouring him with his flashing eyes.

"Hah! hah!" laughed Jaffer, looking round stealthily. "I see her! I see her! I climbed over the wall like a fox! Hah! hah! Nobody sees Jaffer, 'cos he's so thin! I give her the note, and, lawk, she go as white as Master Leigh himself! And she read it too!" he chuckled.

"And," said Leigh, painfully, "what did she say, Jaffer?"

"Nothing!" replied the boy, opening his eyes. Leigh grasped his stick as if his hands had changed from flesh to iron, his teeth closed on his under lip and pierced it till the blood ran down.

"Nothing?" he said, hoarsely. "Think, Jaffer! Not a word?"

"Not a word," said Jaffer, laughing, but rather dimly. "I asked her if so be as there wasn't any message, and she shook her head like this and never said a word."

Wynter Leigh turned his face up to the sky and stood in the blazing sun like a man turned to stone, then with a slow movement, as of one being dead brought back, with pain, to life, walked slowly away, leaving Jaffer looking after and laughing heartily.

Next day at noon Mr. Heatherbridge knocked at the door of Farmer Holt's small office, and without waiting for permission to enter burst in.

"Alfred," exclaimed Farmer Holt, "what's happened?"

"Haven't you heard?" said Mr. Heatherbridge, eagerly.

"What should I ask for then?" asked the farmer, who detested suspense of any kind.

"Indeed no," assented the young man, with a little less exultation. "Wynter Leigh has disappeared. Left the place like a—a—thief. And they say that the cattle are down with the new disease and that the balliffs are in at the Holme."

(To be continued.)

**THE SQUARES.**—A new bill—a very excellent measure in its way—has been brought forward in the House of Commons. Its object is to abolish the abominable monopoly of the different squares in London, and to open them, as Baron Grant did Leicester Square, as places of recreation for all classes.

**A NARROW ESCAPE.**—The young King of Spain was very near being suffocated at Avila by two stoves without pipes with which his bedroom had been warmed. He had, in fact, a narrow escape from sharing the fate of his ancestor, Philip III., who, it is known, died of asphyxia from a brasero. After a heavy sleep, Alfonso XIII. awoke with serious giddiness, and was seized with vomiting. Persons in the neighbouring chambers heard him cry out, and then the noise caused by his falling down brought every one into the room. Great anxiety was felt by all, for an attempt at assassination was for a moment suspected. The king's confidential servant could not render him any service, for he was as ill as his master. The attention of the medical attendant soon restored the patient to himself.

**THE PHILADELPHIA INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION.**—Her Majesty's Government, having accepted the invitation of the President of the United States to take part in the International Exhibition to be opened at Philadelphia on the 1st of April, 1876, have assigned to the Lords of the Committee of Council on Education the charge of the British section. His

Grace the Duke of Richmond, K.G., Lord President of the Council, has appointed Mr. Philip Cunliffe Owen, C.B., the Director of the South Kensington Museum, to act as Executive Commissioner. The offices of the British Executive for the Exhibition are at 5, Craig's Court, Charing Cross, S.W.

## THE SHADOW OF THE STORM.

### CHAPTER V.

"WHAT can it mean?" whispered the countess; "this seems incredible. I saw him so plainly just here by this huge tree, and as if by magic he has vanished entirely. He certainly could not have passed on—that is impossible; and he is not here—that is equally certain."

"Oh, mamma, if it was really a ghost!" "I do not believe in ghosts, Felicie," was the dry response.

But still the countess looked around her anxiously.

Suddenly Felicie, half-dead with fear, seized her arm. She turned hastily, and, behold! some distance down the path was the same figure retracing his steps; it seemed like some spectre watchman on his rounds.

Even the stout heart of the countess was appalled. But another involuntary exclamation from Felicie gave her renewed courage.

Behold! from the opposite direction came another figure, dark-cloaked, spade-equipped, likewise attended by the floating circle of light.

"What!" thought the countess, "two ghosts, possibly three, and at this early hour? Now am I certain that this has a deeper significance than ever."

"Mamma! mamma!" implored Felicie, "what will become of us?"

"We must secrete ourselves somewhere. Don't tremble so, my precious one, there is time for us to retreat."

The words died off from her lips as a strange voice suddenly exclaimed:

"Trust yourselves with me—there is not a moment to lose!"

Whence did it come, the ground or the skies? Poor Felicie was beyond shrieking; her heart stood still, and she felt a cold chill creeping over her whole frame.

But the countess, struggling for calmness though her voice shook, answered:

"Who are you—and where?" "A friend; one whom you need never fear to trust. Come!"

As if by magic the great tree trunk against which the countess leaned yawned, and there stood the dark figure who had so strangely disappeared.

"Come in hither, quickly, and you are safe."

Still, though the other apparitions were rapidly nearing, the countess hesitated.

"Who are you?" repeated she again.

He reached forward, and whispered a name in her ear.

"Come, Felicie," exclaimed the lady, and the daughter was strangely thrilled by the blended relief and sadness of her voice.

They stepped in, both of them, into what seemed a circular closet, and the weird, brownie doorway closed after them.

Their unseen companion pointed out several holes in the gnarled trunk, whispering:

"There are convenient windows; you may well watch your friends, if it is for that you ventured here."

The space allowed only close quarters, and Felicie could hear how her mother breathed heavily.

"Mamma," whispered she, "are you ill?"

And gaining courage herself at the seeming prostration of her mother, she added, cheerfully:

"I am certain we may trust this gentleman, who ever he is, and the moment they are gone we can return to the chateau."

"No, my child, I am not ill, nor in the least frightened. I rest secure and confident."

"Is that quite true?" whispered the stranger.

"Entirely," was the low response.

"Thank you. I hope the darkness does not trouble you, nor the closeness of air. I might give you light, but it would betray our retreat. But hush! they are approaching. The rendezvous is at the other side."

The countess bent her eye to the little aperture and plainly discerned three figures all alike, so that one might be readily taken for the other.

They sat down, not two yards from the tree which sheltered their unsuspected watchers.

"Well, Jacques, what news to night?" said M. Pierre's dry, rasping voice. "How goes on the cause?"

"Gloriously, comrade. Paris is all in a ferment, and the fever is spreading throughout the country."

What think you?—a great company of them went out to that tyrant Louis's palace and compelled him to consent to some of the Assembly requirements. A few more such riots and the whole thing is done, so say a host of the leaders. Then, hurrah for a republic! we will make our proud masters drink of the cup they would have given to us."

"You are sure it is true?" questioned M. Pierre, cautiously. "There will be no mistake about it?"

"Not a bit of it. Jacques came direct from Paris to Frejus. Why, they have killed half a dozen of the aristocrat upholders already; they were expecting a general rise every night; the king himself suspects it, for he attempted to escape, but they brought him back in triumph."

"Then our plans may safely go on?"

"To be sure. Make certain of all the treasure you can, it won't be long before the whole peasantry will come forward to take their share. What harm in looking out for our ahead?"

The three laughed coarsely.

"We haven't got a very mean fortune stowed away already," observed Jacques. "I tell you what, comrade Pierre, you have managed the thing famously. You ought to go to Paris and take a hand there."

"Perhaps I shall when the outbreak comes. To tell the truth, the peasants of the Languedoc lands owe me a little grudge and I shouldn't care to remain here when they obtain control. They don't consider that the count compelled me to be harsh with them."

"I shouldn't like to stand in his shoes in that day," laughed the other man. "I don't doubt but they will tear him limb from limb."

"You will look out for the girl if I shouldn't be about; she's my prize, you know," said M. Pierre.

"What, the daughter? She's very comely, they say."

"Yes, and as haughty as a queen to me. It's out of revenge that I mean to take possession of her after her parents are killed," replied M. Pierre, in a fierce tone.

Felicie reached forward and grasped her mother's icy cold fingers; their unseen companion clenched his hand wrathfully.

M. Pierre went on:

"I've brought some more of the plate to-night. The count's keeping away is a store of luck for us. They don't think of using the richest services at all, and no one looks after it. It was a bright idea playing the ghost. They are all afraid of their own shadow, and don't think of attending to half their duty. The moment the sun sets not a soul of them ventures out of the chateau, and I doubt if the peasants leave their cottages. The field is left clear to us."

"It is cleverly managed, comrade, I grant you that. I have brought some more pikes. We must bury those too. But I reckon they won't lay long in the ground. If the signs don't fail it won't be a month before we are masters here."

"Do they all know what the signal will be?"

"All whom we dared to trust. But we must wait for the tide to set in from Paris. There are hundreds ready to spread the spirit through the country when the scheme is ripe."

"I have spoken for a fishing smack to wait for me off St. Thomas," said M. Pierre, at length.

"What is that for?"

"To take the treasure to safety, and maybe I shall go too."

"That is queer. I should think you would stay to see the fun out."

"Maybe; but I shall want to take Lady Felicie away."

"She'll have to leave off the 'lady' precious soon, I'm thinking. But come, if we are to bury the pikes and silver it's time to attend to the digging. Jolly ghosts are we! It was rare sport for me to throw my brimstone about me when that old demented Jeannot was coming toward me."

"We must thank him for the idea; I should never have thought of it but for him. I believe you won't be able to turn the old dotard; he'll stand up for that proud woman and her daughter to the last minute. I can swear to that."

"Then he will get knocked over himself, that's all," was the brutal rejoinder.

And taking up their shovels the three worthies went forward a little distance, and they in the tree could hear the rapid shovelling and careless talk for a half-hour at least. Then, slowly, one by one they dispersed.

When the coast was once more clear the countess exclaimed, fervently:

"Thank Heaven that I was prompted to come! I shall at least know where to look for my enemy. Oh, why does the count linger in Paris?"

"Because he could not leave. An edict has gone forth from the Assembly prohibiting any one from leaving Paris. It will not hinder him long, however. I left means for their escape, and you may expect them any moment now."

"You are so kind," faltered the countess.



"It is all I live for, except to see poor France cleared from a weight of tyranny," was the sad-toned reply. "I learned of this conspiracy through a comrade of Jacques in Paris, and have cautiously watched their movements. A blessed accident revealed to me the hollow trunk of the huge tree. I went to work cautiously and sawed out the door, fitting it with secret hinges. I have excavated a lateral passage below. See, this board can be lifted. There will be a comfortable and safe retreat underground just below that huge rock, in two days more. I shall store food there. It is for you and your daughter, if the terrible days come I dread—come before you are able to escape from these shores. Innocent and noble-hearted as you are, you will be sacrificed because of your connection with Count Languedoc, unless I save you."

"Heaven bless you!" ejaculated Lady Felicie. The countess struggled a moment with herself, and then said, firmly:

"You must save the count likewise, or I shall not stir a step from the chateau!"

"If it be possible. I will do my best," was the grave reply.

"Now I can exclaim also—Heaven bless you, Emile!" sobbed the countess.

"Emile!" exclaimed Lady Felicie, "Oh, mamma, is it Emile? How I wish it were not dark!"

At the words their companion lighted the little lantern hanging at his belt, whose round reflector threw the ghastly circle upon the ground. He held it up so that the pale light revealed to him her eager, earnest face in all its girlish loveliness, and gave to her his pale, noble countenance, with those deep, luminous eyes, the broad, intellectual sweep of the forehead, and those sadly wistful lips.

"Sweet image of the past! what can you know of Emile?" exclaimed he.

"My mother has told me; and, ah! I admire, I respect you so much; and I wish—"

"What do you wish, innocent one?"

"That I could comfort you!" was Felicie's fervent answer.

He seized her hand and kissed it passionately. She was almost sure that a shower of hot tears accompanied the caress.

"Be satisfied; you have comforted me. Countess, this is the sweetest moment I have known for years."

"Heaven will reward you somewhen, Emile, I can never for a moment doubt it. As for me, I am powerless to express my gratitude for your disinterested devotion."

He turned the light slowly upon her face, and was evidently shocked at the traces of care and time.

"So changed!" murmured he. "Ah, my lady, heart griefs wear deepest. You had scarcely been more worn had you become a peasant's wife!"

The countess made a deprecating gesture.

"Hush, Emile, do not allude to the past. I am a faded, careworn woman, and I am the Countess Languedoc. Both should prevent you from recalling any other knowledge of me. I am thankful to see you still in the very palm of manly strength; and I am deeply grateful for your kindness."

His eye had turned again upon Felicie. "The past years seem but a day when I look upon her. It seems that I once more behold the Lady Violante of my youthful dreams," murmured he, in a dreamy tone.

"My daughter is betrothed to the young Marquis De Berri. The marriage is to take place at once."

"I know," answered Emile, with a grim smile. "He is a noble youth, and is worthy of her. Though these be scarcely the times for marrying or giving in marriage, may prosperity and peace attend them! It should be so if my poor will were law. And now to return to the danger which surrounds you. It is imperative that I return to Paris immediately, but I shall make no tarrying there. I only go to perfect arrangements for your future safety. I do not believe there will be any disturbance during my absence. At all events you have this retreat in case of imperative need. I shall work on the subterranean chamber the rest of the night, and leave it habitable, though not as comfortable as I intended to leave it. I think you will see the count in two days at the longest. Of course you will not need my caution to keep all this you have witnessed to-night entirely to yourself. By all means try to appear before this treacherous overseer as if you had still faith in his honesty."

"We shall fortunately be spared the need of dissembling. He is aware how little respect we bear him."

"That is well. Now we must arrange some signal whereby I may acquaint you with my presence here. What shall it be?"

"A bunch of wild flowers thrown on the rocky bridge of the meadow. I will look for them myself every morning," said Felicie, eagerly.

"Some one might pick them up," observed the countess.

"Oh, no, for I shall be before them all," answered Felicie.

"So be it then. And now I will accompany you through the woods in sight of the chateau."

"Pray extinguish your lantern," cried Felicie, anxiously. "I shall have no fancy for the uncanny company of a ghost."

"Where are your fears, Felicie? In view of all we have heard and seen, I expected you would need all my persuasion to keep you calm."

"Ah! but I did not know in the beginning that Emile was to be our protector."

"Sweet, ingenuous child!" cried Emile. "Heaven give me the power to deserve your charming confidence. I cannot resist the influence. Countess Violante, I must thank you for teaching your daughter to have such kindly sentiments for me."

"I told her the story, Emile, to explain why I had kept her in such strict retirement, and because of her girlish repugnance to her marriage with the marquis."

"You do not approve, then, these unions which consult only fortune and title, Lady Felicie?" observed Emile, as they slowly left the wood.

"I abhor them!" returned she, with fervour. "And what says the countess?"

"That it is cruel to excite repugnance to destiny you know is inevitable. But the system is as detestable to me as any one."

"It is to last but a frail moment longer," ejaculated Emile. "Oh, France! at what horrible carnival of frightful passions is your purification to come?"

They had now reached the open moor, from which the roof and chimneys of the chateau could be plainly seen.

"Do not accompany us farther; there is no occasion for it, and your time is valuable," said the countess.

He turned at once. "Then I will wish you good night."

The ladies waited till the woods hid his figure from them, then went slowly toward the chateau, from whose boudoir window as they approached nearer they saw the cheerful lights streaming forth like a beaming star.

"Oh, mamma," said Lady Felicie, "I wonder so much at you! Title, nor fortune, nor forty fathers should have separated me from Emile, so grand and heroic as he is!"

The countess paused suddenly, and, leaning heavily against her daughter, burst into a perfect passion of tears.

The sternly pent emotions once finding vent, it seemed that she would never grow calm again.

Felicie was deeply alarmed. She passed both arms around the weeping figure, kissed her frantically, called her by every endearing name and besought her to recover composure.

Nothing seemed to avail until suddenly the idea occurred to the daughter to feign alarm.

"Hark!" exclaimed she; "oh, mamma, is not that M. Pierre yonder?"

One great shudder shook the countess, and, seizing Felicie by the hand, she dragged her into the shelter of a cluster of mulberry trees. She listened anxiously for several moments, then cautiously resumed their approach to the chateau. The little ruse had been successful.

They reached the balcony in safety, stealthily followed the unused corridor and gained the boudoir.

Hastily removing their wrappers, and putting them out of sight, the pair sat down and assumed an attitude of careless indolence, as though they had remained there through the whole evening.

"We must show them that we are here. Open a book, Felicie, as though you were reading, and then ring the bell and order a flask of wine. I am deathly faint. Give the order yourself, for I fancy I could not steady my tones yet."

She leaned back in the chair, her face as pale as marble.

Lady Felicie quickly obeyed her wish. The unconscious maid hastily obeyed the command, then said, timidly:

"Oh, my lady, have you looked out on the lawn this evening? Jacques declares that there were dark shapes fitting about, though to be sure they had no spades nor lights. We are all so frightened!"

"Foolish things—go say your prayers and you will be safe," answered Lady Felicie, to save her mother the occasion to speak.

(To be continued.)

A MADE MAN.—A cloth maker, very eminent, was proud of his cloth, and wished to be married in his own make. Most men have their weaknesses at this poetic moment of their lives. He took the cloth to a great West-end—we will call him Water-in-Pond. Mr. Pond's great artist took his measure, and promised to do the coat for seven guineas. "I have

a piece of cloth," said the merchant, "a special piece of cloth, which I wish to use. Will you make it up for me?" "Certainly," said Mr. Pond. "At what reduction?" demanded the merchant. "Oh!" replied Pond, "we don't charge for material—we give you that in; our price is solely for cutting and fitting; seven guineas if you please, sir. The cloth is of no consequence." With pride lowered, but for the sake of a splendid fit, he consented, and was made a man, after having, as he thought, through his industry, become a made man.

## SCIENCE.

MR. GEORGE SMITH has discovered, among the Assyrian tablets in the British Museum, the legend of the building of the Tower of Babel. This discovery is quite as important as that of the tablet relating to the Deluge, made known last year by the same gentleman.

VARNISH FOR WHITE WOODS.—Dissolve three pounds of bleached shellac in one gallon of spirits of wine; strain, and add one and one half more gallons of spirit. If the shellac be pure and white this will make a beautifully clear covering for white wooden articles.

ROCK SALT.—The recent discovery of a valuable bed of rock salt in Wartenberg is a chance result of deep boring which is now being carried on in the immediate vicinity of Stuttgart for the purpose of sinking an Artesian well to supply the town with water. The salt was discovered at a depth of 192 metres, and is about 9 metres in thickness. A mining concession has been granted for the working of the stratum, and will form the nucleus of an important branch of industry in that locality.

CONSUMPTION OF WOOD IN FRANCE.—Every person in France consumes on the average daily five lucifer matches, so that 4,600,000,000 matches are consumed monthly by the entire population. A large quantity of soft wood is used for making toys, and to give an idea of the magnitude of this trade it will be sufficient to take one article alone, children's drums, of which, in Paris alone, 200,000 are sold every month. The total number made annually in France is estimated at thirty millions, whilst a considerable quantity of wood must be consumed to supply sixty millions of drumsticks.

NEW STYLE OF PHOTO PORTRAITS.—The pictures are made upon the white ferrotype plate which is now being manufactured largely, and which combines with great beauty the most simple manipulations, and all the advantages of the porcelain picture, without any of its defects. The plate being of a very pure white and properly prepared, all that is necessary is to pour on the colloidal-chloride, dry it by a gentle heat, expose it to vapour of ammonia for a short time, and then print very slightly deeper than it is desired to be when finished. It is washed, toned, and fixed in a similar manner to the ordinary mode followed in making porcelain pictures. The result is a picture of exceeding delicacy and durability.

VENTILATION.—In a recent physiological work a very simple method of ventilating sleeping-rooms is mentioned, which is said to prevent a draught being felt—an inconvenience often experienced when rooms are ventilated by the windows. A piece of wood 3 in. high and exactly as long as the breadth of the window is to be prepared. Let the sash be now raised, the slip of wood placed on the sill, and the sash drawn closely upon it. If the slip has been well fitted there will be no draught in consequence of this displacement of the sash at its lower part; but the top of the lower sash will overlap the bottom of the upper one, and between the two bars perpendicular currents of air, not felt as draught, will enter and leave the room.

MIXED FIBRES IN FABRICS.—As a mode of ascertaining the various kinds of materials in mixed fabrics a German industrial journal gives, after M. Vupp, the following treatment for fabrics containing silk and wool, with vegetable fibres. All vegetable fibres resist caustic alkaline solutions, even when boiling, and are dissolved by sulphuric, nitric, hydrochloric acids, even when diluted with heat. Vegetable fibres when burnt do not give forth any characteristic odour. Wool, insoluble in the above acids, is readily attacked by caustic alkalies, especially when hot; the sulphur which it contains combines with the alkali, and the solution becomes black when acetate of lead is added to it. In burning, wool produces the same smell as horn. Silk is dissolved both in acids and the caustic alkalies, and produces an odour similar to that of wool; but it contains no sulphur, and consequently its solution in alkalies is not blackened by acetate of lead. In order to distinguish these materials in a tissue it is treated first with concentrated hydrochloric acid, cold; the residue is then washed in a filter, and if necessary bleached, by means of water

containing chlorine, and then washed again in pure water and boiled with caustic soda, which dissolves the wool, leaving the vegetable fibre intact. The wool is distinguished from silk by adding acetate of lead to the liquid, as already mentioned.

**ADULTERATION OF SOAMMONY.**—A large trade has hitherto existed between Aleppo and England in extract of scammony; but we are told that comparatively little is now exported. "On account of its mixture with other substances," only twenty cases in all, weighing 2,100 lbs., were shipped during the past year, the value of which was 1,680*l.* and the whole of this came to England. In the previous year 737 cases were exported, showing that adulteration alone is rapidly driving this article out of the import market, for the roots are produced as abundantly as ever, and are dug up and sent to England, the extract being procured from them in this country. In 1873 467 cases, weighing 91,340 lbs., and valued at 362*l.*, were shipped from Aleppo to England. Considering the bulk and weight of the roots as compared with that of the extract and the consequent increase of the cost of freight, it would seem that this exportation of the roots themselves can scarcely be a profitable trade to the shippers, inasmuch as 467 cases are valued only at 362*l.*, while twenty cases of the extract are worth 1,680*l.*

**RENDERING GLASS INFRACTIBLE.**—Upon the authority of the electrician Siemens, we learn that a French farmer has made a discovery which will probably hand his name down to posterity, and cause a revolution in the manufacture of glass. This fortunate agriculturist, when not engaged in breeding cattle, or raising beehives, has found leisure to study the process of annealing glass. His labours have been rewarded by the discovery that when glass is heated to redness and cooled on oil it is rendered wonderfully tough and infrangible. Should this discovery prove correct, it is impossible to fully calculate the effect it will have upon the glass trade. In future street or election riots we may expect to see the stones and missiles of the rioters rebounding from unfractured panes as though they had struck the brickwork of a wall, instead of hearing a crashing of fractured glass so familiar in the present day under similar circumstances. The publican may look on with mortified bosom as he hears the drunken customer using his tumbler upon the table for a hammer to call up the waiter, or smile complacently as he sees some drunken hurl a glass at a companion's head in a fit of bibulous frenzy. How calmly, too, a mistress will be able to listen to faking valets as her maid dilly rolls them off the drawing-room mantelpiece during her maternal dusting foray. The fortunate proprietor of a greenhouse will listen with complacency to the rattling of stones shied by passing schoolboys on to his glass roofing.

## THE GIPSY PEER;

A SLAVE OF CIRCUMSTANCES.

### CHAPTER LXIV.

TAZONI rode back to the Hall, flung himself from the saddle and ran up the steps, burning with excitement.

From the dining-room Lady Northcliffe came out to meet him.

"Traunt!" she exclaimed, laying her hand upon his arm and looking up to him proudly. "I was half afraid that you had run away from us all again." "No," he said, "I shall never play traunt again; but," he added, looking over her shoulder as he kissed her, "they all seem to have run away from you, mother."

Lady Northcliffe started with delight at the word. How sweetly he spoke it, and how greedily her thirsty heart drank it in.

"Yes," she said, "I do not know where they have gone; perhaps to Florence, who must be ill, very ill, poor girl, after all she has gone through."

She kept her eyes upon his face as she spoke, and he, conscious of her scrutiny, endeavored to suppress the flush which rose to his brow and the light which flashed to his eyes.

Lady Northcliffe smiled shyly.

"Ay," she said, "vain boy, you think you can console her. Hush! a mother's eyes are sharp, and great, big men like you do not blush for nothing. Sir, you are very wicked and artful; and Florence is worse. Oh, but I must have full confession!"

Tazoni stroked her hand and averted his eyes and blushed again like a girl.

Lady Northcliffe smiled joyfully, then sighed jealously.

"My son," she murmured, "you must save a corner of your heart for your mother and your father."

Tazoni pressed her hand.

"My father!" he breathed. "How strange, how grandly awful it sounds! How I long to see him,

to hold his hand. Ay, my mother, Heaven has poured its gifts out with so lavish a hand to-day that my sense is not large enough to comprehend or grasp them. Father, mother, and—and—" "Mistress!" whispered Lady Northcliffe.

At that moment Mr. Hitchem, who had been quietly waiting for an opportunity to interrupt the interview, knocked at the door.

"Come in," said Tazoni. "Ah," he exclaimed, holding out his hand with a smile, "it is you. Mother, I owe this gentleman, I am almost inclined to think, all the joys I am revelling in. He has striven hard to restore me to my own—even against myself."

Lady Northcliffe left Tazoni, and held out both her hands with a charming smile of gratitude, which completely overpowered Mr. Hitchem, who bowed, scraped the ground, crimsoned like flame, and at last ventured to touch the small white right hand respectfully.

"How can we thank you enough? Do you know what you have given me, sir? A son! A son!"

Mr. Hitchem bowed again, and a moist extraordinary moisture dimmed his keen sight.

"I—ahem—your ladyship will excuse me," he faltered, more embarrassed than he had ever been before in all his adventurous life. "But duty—only did my duty, and—well, my lady—hang me if it's not truth, and so I ain't afraid to say it; but if it was to be done all over again just for the pleasure of doing it, just for love as one may say, I'd jump at the work, and gladly. Ah, he is a son—if you like my lady—and, and, there, I wish he was mine. My wife died with my only little one on her bosom, my lady," he added, with simple pathos.

Then, as if quite ashamed of displaying his feeling, resumed in his usual tones.

"But time is passing, my lady. The carriage is at the door, and the earl is waiting, my lord."

Tazoni looked round, thinking that the latter part of the sentence had been addressed to Lord Harry or Lord Dartleagle, who might have entered the room unnoticed by them.

But Mr. Hitchem's grin and Lady Northcliffe's smile reminded him of his position.

"Eh? Oh, yes," he said, with a grave, eager smile. "I forgot. We are quite ready."

And he drew Lady Northcliffe's arm within his own, and led her to the carriage, which started off at a signal from Mr. Hitchem, who jumped upon his horse and followed after.

Tazoni was very eager and trembled with anxiety and excitement as they neared Northcliffe.

Lady Northcliffe, who knew well all that his heart was throbbing with, sat close to him and stroked his hand or toyed with his fingers, whispering little words of endearment, to which he never failed to respond with others of tender affection.

At last as the mansion rose in sight from amidst the elms his face paled.

"Mother," he said, brokenly, "does he, my father, know that I am his son?"

"I cannot tell," said Lady Northcliffe. "No one of us knows how much the other knows. That man, Mr. Hitchem, has moved us all like puppets. Your father may be in possession of all the truth or only a part of it. He is very weak, has been very ill, Tazoni. You will strive to be calm?"

Tazoni pressed her hand, and the carriage stopping at the entrance, lifted her on to the steps, performing the act as tenderly as if he were a woman and she a child.

Arm-in-arm they entered the Hall.

A lawyer slipped from out of the ante-room and made a bow to Tazoni.

"He knows," interrupted Lady Northcliffe. "I will go in first, and when I call come quickly."

Tazoni, with a gesture of assent, followed her up to Lord Northcliffe's apartments, opened the door, and let her pass in alone.

A few minutes elapsed, during which he stood palpitating in the corridor.

Then Lady Northcliffe came out. Her face was streaming with tears, and she was unable to speak for a moment or so.

Then as she held out her hand to him she said:

"He has been told, and he is beaten down with shame and sorrow. But he will see you and his grief will pass away. Oh, I am so glad you are—"

She did not finish the sentence but looked him over with so proud a light in her eyes that he stooped and kissed her.

Then they pushed open the door and entered.

The room swam before Tazoni's eyes, and he felt as if he was about to swoon, but a voice, soft, tremulous with emotion, and musical, saved him.

"This!—my son!" it said, with accents of wondering pride.

And with a great sob Tazoni fell on his knees at the feet of the aged figure and noble face.

There let us leave him.

The pen falls from a hand powerless to describe

that meeting, where love, long pent up and shut back in the kindly hungering heart, poured forth and overwhelmed the now sound son.

An hour had flown by before Tazoni and his mother passed out of the room, leaving the old man with renewed health, filled with the elixir of hope and love's pride.

The hall was thronged with servants, who, as their lady and the young lord descended the stairs, set up a cheer of welcome and rejoicing, which came from their hearts, for they read in Tazoni's face a promise of kindness and protection which they had looked for in vain from the base usurper, Raymond.

Not a soul about the place but had reason to dislike the gipsy's son, who was, indeed, universally detested. But there was something in the generous grasp of the new lord's hand which filled them with glad assurance of a kind, considerate master, and one old man, with tears in his eyes, insisted upon kissing the white, strong hand, which he held up, and gazed at, calling out to his fellows:

"There—there be the old lord's hand, as well as his face! Bless him!"

With some difficulty Tazoni led his mother, who was delighted with their loyalty and eagerness, through the little crowd, which swooped down to the servants' hall to chatter and cheer to its heart's content.

When they had left Lord Northcliffe, Mr. Hitchem had gone up to him.

There were some instructions which the earl had to give him and which Mr. Hitchem found it difficult to follow out.

They were to the effect that no pains should be spared to shield the prisoner Raymond from punishment.

The gentle-minded old man could not bear to think that the man whom he had looked on for so many years as his own flesh and blood should be doomed to a convict's fate.

No pains nor expense were to be spared, and as an evidence of his sincerity and anxiety Lord Northcliffe wrote a cheque, payable to Mr. Hitchem, for a thousand pounds.

"Mind," he said, in his gentle, impressive voice, "this is to be devoted to that object. As for yourself, I do not think any sum would be adequate to your deserts. Money cannot reward such conduct as yours, but it may serve as a small token of our sense of its worth, and so, sir, if you will accept this I shall feel true pleasure."

"This" was a cheque for three thousand pounds, and as the old earl tendered it he held out his hand with the grateful smile.

Mr. Hitchem stared, turned pale, and looked, for the second time that day, overwhelmed.

"My—lord—I—er—er—this is a—large amount."

"No," said Lord Northcliffe. "And I do not intend that it should represent all the debt I owe you. I give it you for your present need. When you have succeeded in the efforts you are going to make for—for that unhappy man—come to me and I will show you, sir, that there is still gratitude amongst men."

Mr. Hitchem bowed to the ground.

"I'll go, my lord; I'll save him if he can be saved! I'll—hang me if I wouldn't go to the end of the world for such gentlemen as you, my lord! It's a lot of money you've given—a ridiculous, unheard-of lot, but I'd give the whole of it for the honour of that shake of the hands, and that's as true as Heaven above us." And so, fearing to trust himself in the room another moment, Mr. Hitchem bolted out with sudden and excited energy; muttering as he ran down the stairs "Blood's blood after all; there's nothing like the aristocracy, Heaven bless 'em!"

The doctor had permitted luncheon to be laid in Lord Northcliffe's room, and thither Lady Northcliffe and Tazoni again repaired.

The earl was waiting for them anxiously, and as soon as they entered dismissed the servants.

"We'll enjoy it by ourselves," he said, motioning Tazoni to a chair beside his own.

"And they tell me you are a wonderful man, a poet, an athlete, and I know not what else beside," he said, after a break in Tazoni's recital of some of his adventures.

"I am a very happy one, sir," said Tazoni, smiling at Lady Northcliffe.

The earl glanced at the countess with a queer, half-curious look, then raised his eyes to a portrait over the mantel, saying, as he lowered them to Tazoni's face again:

"You bear your birthright in your face; you are a true Northcliffe. Let me see your hands."

Tazoni held them out laughingly.

The earl looked at them and smiled approvingly, then glanced at his old velvet coat and rough woodman's gaiters.

Tazoni saw the glance and laughed again rather mischievously.

"I ought to have apologized for my attire, my



lord, but you must remember that I am a gipsy chief, and that I am only clothed as befits my humble station."

"Ay," said the earl, "I want to see your tribe. The doctor tells me that I must not excite myself. Poor fellow, it is rather hard for him to have a man come in and cure me in half an hour after he has had me in hand to no effect for all these months. I feel like a young man," he continued, looking lovingly at the countess, "and there sits a young girl. Oh, what an elixir is happiness!"

Then they talked gravely of that unhappy man whose sin, so long and so thickly sown, were now bearing their dreadful harvest. And Lord Northcliffe told them what he had said to Mr. Hitchem, and Tazoni volunteered to go to town and exert himself in the behalf of the man who had kept him from all that made life dear and tried to work him so much harm.

While they were talking Lady Northcliffe uttered a shocked little cry.

"What's the matter?" said Tazoni.

"I had quite forgotten poor Lord Harry!" replied the countess. "My great happiness has made me selfish. I never asked him to come back with us—indeed, I never thought of him—all my heart was with you."

Tazoni smiled reproachfully.

"I do not think you need feel anxious for him," he said. "I have not forgotten him, I have been thinking of him several times, and each time have felt delighted at remembering that he was happy where he is."

"Where is he?" asked Lady Northcliffe, anxiously.

"Here," said a voice, as a servant knocked at the door, and Lord Harry's handsome face appeared.

"Come in," said Lord Northcliffe, while Tazoni jumped up and caught his friend's hand, "come in, Harry; I always loved you, but I little thought I should have seen you so glad to be here!"

Lord Harry came in and shook the old earl's hand with hearty delight for an instant only, then strode to the door and handed in a lady.

"Lurli!" exclaimed Tazoni.

Lady Northcliffe rose and looked from one to the other with a smile.

Lord Northcliffe smiled also.

"Ah," he said, "you are the young lady my son has spoken so much of. Let me kiss you, my dear, for all your goodness to him," and the old man took her in his arms and kissed her.

Lady Northcliffe embraced her silently, but with tearful eyes, and seated her in a chair beside them.

"I am so glad you have come," she murmured, "I did so want to thank you. My son has spoken of you a thousand times this morning. You must let me be your mother, you know. You have some one else to love you too," she added, slyly glancing at Lord Harry, who was seated near Lord Northcliffe, and looking on with a twinkle in his calm brown eyes.

Lurli crimsoned and looked down.

"I thought you would be glad to see the young lady," said Lord Harry, with suppressed triumph. "So, with a great deal of diffidence, I persuaded her to accompany me. You were always fond of the Dalkines, my lord, and you ought to love her for her own as well as my sake."

"I do," said Lord Northcliffe, with a smile and a little puzzled air.

"You must come and live with me and be my daughter," said Lady Northcliffe. "Will you?"

Lurli glanced at Lord Harry appealingly.

"I will, dear lady," she said, "if—"

"You can be spared from Wargarth Castle," said Lord Harry.

"Ah, I see," said Lord Northcliffe. "I see! Sly rogue! Let me kiss you again, my dear. Well, Wargarth Castle could not have a better or more beautiful mistress," he said, earnestly.

"No," exclaimed Tazoni, proudly.

"No," echoed Lord Harry.

Then he rose beaming of enjoyment, and taking Lurli's hand advanced to Lady Northcliffe.

"I cannot contain my secret any longer, dear Lady Northcliffe. You know how eagerly I have been searching for my relatives. That search is over, I have found one to inherit Lord Dalkine's money."

"Yes," said Lady Northcliffe, puzzled, and glancing from one to the other.

"I have found one—this is she! Lady Northcliffe, let me present to you my cousin and betrothed, Lady Lurli Dalkine!"

"What!" exclaimed the old lord, starting from his chair, while Tazoni, who had been looking on in bewilderment, dropped his glass and sprang across the room.

"What! This—this young lady is—"

"Lord Dalkine's daughter, my cousin, and my future wife!"

Lady Northcliffe caught Lurli sobbing to her bosom, but not before Tazoni had snatched a kiss.

"Let me get outside," he said, "or I shall go stark mad! Lurli—your cousin—Lady Dalkine—Harry, come and pump on me or I shan't believe I'm awake!"

"Come on," said Lord Harry, "we'll leave them to cry their hearts out, and you and I will work off our excitement in the open air."

And so, like a couple of happy school boys, they leapt down the grand staircase three steps at a time, ran across the hall, and bounded out on to the terrace, where Tazoni did not let his friend have a moment's rest until he had told him all the full particulars of the last glorious surprise.

That night the village was all alive as if there was a great fair in its midst.

Lord Northcliffe had used his newly returned energy in giving orders for the unlimited supply of good liquor and tempting viands.

Great tents were pitched on the moor, barrels of beer were rolled into them.

The long tables which Lord Harry had caused to be set up were soon bending beneath the weight of beef and mutton, raised pies and other sources of enjoyment.

The blind fiddler and harper, and the boy who played the flute at christenings and marriages, soon appeared on the scene, and piped and strummed and played while the crowd ate and drank, laughed and talked with excited ease.

Then when coming out in one of the men stole off with mysterious looks, and reappeared, donning shining tabs of gold and carrying great logs of fuel.

Merely the work of building up a huge bonfire went on, and when night had fallen Colin, the gipsy, amidst great shouting, fired the first brand.

Up shot the flames and struck a sharp approach to Tazoni's heart.

"Mother," he said, "in my happiness I have been in danger of forgetting my old and true friends."

"No, it is my fault," said Lady Northcliffe. "You shall go to them. May I will come too."

And like a girl, as Lord Northcliffe said, she ran upstairs for her outdoor clothes, returned soon, and arm-in-arm with Tazoni walked over to the moor.

Lord Northcliffe would have liked to have joined them, but the doctors peremptorily forbade it, and so he had to be content with watching the flames of the bonfire from his window.

Be sure Tazoni and his mother were not long on the moor before they were discovered. Then there arose such a cheer of welcome, such a shout of delight that Lord Northcliffe caught the echo of it at his post and shuddered with glee.

There too on the moor were Lord Harry and Lady Lurli, who had stepped out from the Hall just a little while before Tazoni and Lady Northcliffe. What with the four of the crowd were hoarse with excitement and enthusiasm. Then the great folk stole away.

The bonfire died out. The merry-makers, headed by the three musicians, returned, dancing, singing, and shouting, to their homes.

That night, after Tazoni had torn himself away from his newly found parents, he lay down on the luxurious couch in the magnificent room, and gave himself up to the ecstasy of realizing his happiness.

Then through it all there stole a sigh, and as he fell asleep the sigh formed one word on his lips—that word the name of her who had never been absent from his thoughts throughout that wild, exciting day: Florence!

#### CHAPTER LXV.

FLORENCE! Beautiful, proud Florence! What of her? For some time a feeling of sad, weary thankfulness overwhelmed her. She had been rescued from the vile creature who had threatened, like the fabled monster of old, to devour her. But at what cost? At the cost of her father's happiness, of her family's pride!

For weeks, though Tazoni rode over to Earls-court, she kept out of his way, and, when he asked to see her, which he did imploringly every other day, she always refused.

She could not trust herself in his presence.

Her love for him rendered him dangerous.

She felt that it would not be seeming to render up herself to the rightful Lord Hursley after so narrowly and so recently escaping from a marriage with the usurper.

So she would not see him, but devoted all her time and strength to comforting and consoling her father.

Lord and Lady Dartegle were more delighted and grateful than they could express to the Providence which had stepped in and given to their dear friends their own flesh and blood, while it had rescued their own child; but they could not, amidst all their gratitude, put away from them the dread of the fast-approaching hour when the crash should come and the blow should fall.

Tazoni and Lord Northcliffe could see that some sorrow hung over their friends' heads, but they could not force themselves into their confidence, and imagined, to a great extent, that they were still sore from the exposed and terrible scene in the church.

With this idea they did all they could to dispel their grief and embarrassment.

Tazoni rode over every day. Lord Northcliffe, as soon as the doctor would allow him to go out, went on to Earls-court and implored them to let Florence come over to Northcliffe, but to all prayers and entreaties the Dartegles remained quietly, sorrowfully reserved, and Tazoni was nearly at his wits' end with the suspense, the uncertainty and the torment of unsatisfied love.

So tortured was he that, anxious as he was to give all possible attention to matters which clamoured for his notice, he could not bring himself to apply to anything for long together, and at last, in despair of accomplishing anything of the many things he had set his heart upon, he sent for Mr. Hitchem.

Mr. Hitchem arrived, and made his report.

The trial of Luke and Raymond Smeaton was fixed at a date three months from that time.

Horace Denville's was to come on in a month, and Mr. Hitchem, while collecting evidence against the latter, had been exerting himself to stultify the testimony against the former.

Then as he listened to Tazoni, noticing, of course, the young man's disordered state, agreed to undertake the erection of certain cottages which Lord Northcliffe had determined to erect on the plantation for the gipsies, and set to work with his usual quiet energy by going over the plans.

He returned to London, but, much to Tazoni's surprise, appeared at the Hall on the following evening.

He wanted to see Lord Northcliffe and Lord Hursley, and when he was shown in he told his business in a very short time. So important did it prove that Tazoni and he started for London that same night, posting all the way.

On the morning while Tazoni and Mr. Hitchem were still on the road—Lord Dartegle's face blanched as he read his letters.

Florence, who had been watching him, rose and stole to his side.

"Has it come, dear?" she asked.

"Yes," he said, huskily. "It will fall to-morrow. Hush! here is your mother."

They had decided to conceal the nearness of the calamity from Lady Dartegle, but their faces told her all.

She cried bitterly, but Florence could not weep; she had no room for tears, her heart was brimful of anguish for her father.

The day passed, and the night was spent sleeplessly.

On the following morning Lord Dartegle had decided to go up to London and bear his share of the reproaches and abuse which would be heaped upon the Board of Directors.

He dressed himself with great care, and, as the carriage drove round, he kissed his wife and dearly loved daughter, and smiled—on, so easily and so wearily.

"Be brave, dear," murmured Florence.

He kissed her again and stroked her hair.

"Heaven reward you for your love and tenderness, my darling," he muttered, and he released her suddenly and left the room.

As he did so a carriage dashed up to the door.

Florence looked out with tear-dimmed eyes. "It is the Northcliffe carriage," said Lady Dartegle; "what can have happened? Oh, not some fresh sorrow!"

As she spoke two gentlemen leapt out of the carriage and ran up the steps.

The next instant they heard a cry from the hall, and rushing out found Lord Dartegle staggering in the arms of Tazoni.

Lady Dartegle shrieked.

Florence ran and fell on her knees beside her father.

"Hush!" said Tazoni, "he is all right, thank Heaven! It was my fault, I told him too soon!"

"What—the mine?" sobbed Lady Dartegle.

"Saved!" breathed Lord Dartegle, sinking into a chair and holding out a hand to each of the men. "Saved! Florence, look at him! He has saved Earls-court and your father's life, for I know that if the mine had gone I could not have lived through this day's work!"

"No—no," said Tazoni, in deep distress as Lady Dartegle fell on her knees and caught his hand with a burst of tears. "No, no, for Heaven's sake! Dear, dear, Lady Dartegle—see! see! Florence!" and he sprang forward and caught Florence in his arms at the very nick of time.

For the first time in her life she had fainted.

Rising in his strong arms, he carried her into the drawing-room, and, laying her on the sofa, fell on



[MY FATHER.]

his knees beside her, while Lady Dartagle called for water.

Before it could be brought Florence recovered, and opening her beautiful eyes let them rest upon Tazoni's face with such a wealth of love outpouring from them that he closed his own for a second to drink in the glorious joy.

Lady Dartagle looked from one to the other, then stole from the room and ascended to Lord Dartagle's room, where the two earls had gone to talk over the grand tidings.

Florence, when she saw that her mother had left her alone with Tazoni, rose and looked round with helpless distress.

But Tazoni, without rising, caught her hand and drew her to the sofa again.

She sank down and tried to draw her hand from his grasp, but he held it tightly and pressed one passionate kiss after another on it.

"Oh, my darling, have some pity on me!" he pleaded, looking up at her with all his soul in his eyes, his voice tremulous with emotion. "Remember how I have loved you all these years! You will not cast me aside, Florence—you will not turn all my joy to misery? Oh, my darling, I cannot live without you! I cannot, I cannot! Florence, speak to me—tell me I may hope! Tell me—tell me that you love me!"

The words had left his lips at last—so softly breathed that they seemed scarce spoken.

Her heart beat then, and leapt within her bosom.

She trembled, flushed, paled, and at last allowed him to draw her to his breast.

Then the pent-up passion of months burst forth, and almost terrified her.

He pressed her so closely to him that she could scarcely breathe, he kissed her, her eyes, her hair, her brow, till her face was all on flame, he poured passionate epithets upon her thirsty ears, until her heart throbbed with blind ecstasy, and at last, when she could tear herself from his clasp, she fled from the room and left him.

Though they had expected it, Lord and Lady Northcliffe received the news of his betrothal with the utmost delight, and, instead of rebuking his hot impatience, only encouraged it.

Florence must be his, he declared, before he could be able to realize all the delight that Providence had so lavishly poured out for him.

Florence must be his! It was of no avail for the dear girl herself to plead for time, of no effect the mild reluctance of her parents to marry her so soon after that terrible morning. Tazoni would brook no delay, and at last worked himself into such a state

with his impatience that for sheer pity they at last consented, and Florence was promised to him that same summer.

No sooner did Lord Harry hear of it than he declared that he must be married the same day, and he was so backed up by Lord Tazoni that Lurli, after a little fighting, yielded too.

The months flew by. The trials to which all had been looking with so much pain came on and passed away. With them passed away also the evil geniuses of our hero's life.

Though Mr. Hitchem strove to the utmost, he could not shield the wicked and abandoned from their just punishment.

Luke and Raymond Smeaton and Horace Denville, all three, were sentenced to penal servitude for life.

When they had been carried away for ever beyond the ken of those they had injured another wicked genius disappeared.

Emilia Smeaton could not endure to breathe the same air with the woman she had tried to wrong and insult. She left England and was seen some years afterwards, faded, prematurely old, and marked with the gambler's unmistakable brand, leaning over a rouge-et-noir table in one of the small German principalities. Then she disappeared for ever, and no one but the porter of the little German cemetery could point out the small part in which the restless, scheming Emilia at last found rest and surcease from remorse.

So the summer sped on and the wedding-day arrived. It was to have been quiet, but all the world knew it, for Mr. Plumpett, who was to be one of the honoured guests, had made it known in the "Fashionable Gazette." All the world knew it, and never seemed tired of talking of it. Invitations came in from great ladies and leaders of ton; and when Florence and Lady Lurli appeared for one night only at a ball of Lady Prettillace's their appearance created so genuine a sensation that Lady Prettillace wept tears of delighted satisfaction at the possession of such lions. It need hardly be said that Lords Tazoni and Harry were there also. Indeed so madly in love was Tazoni that he could scarcely endure to have Florence out of his sight.

So the wedding-day arrived. Preparations had been made at Earls Court, but great as they were they were not sufficient to accommodate the immense crowds.

Every one from whom Tazoni had received kindly help in his days of trouble had been asked by Lord Northcliffe, who had with Mr. Hitchem's assistance procured a list of such.

Mr. Hitchem had now grown so indispensable at the Hall that he had consented to remain a fixture, and seemed so much at his ease in the position of Lord Northcliffe's right-hand man that one would have thought he had been there all his life.

The cottages which Lord Northcliffe had been building were nearly completed, and the gipsies, for once, had consented to cast off their nomadic habits and settle down near their beloved prince.

They were all to be at the wedding, and they worked off their superfluous enthusiasm in building triumphal arches and decorating every place that had points capable of decoration.

The day arrived; the two brides, beautiful and blushing, were led to the altar, and the two heroes were crowned with great joy at last.

It would need the pen of a Homer to catalogue the events of that day—Mr. Plumpett made his endeavour in the "Fashionable Gazette" and failed. Suffice it that we record one little incident.

Florence—we beg her pardon, Lady Florence Huraley—stands in the little ante-room.

Beside her is her husband—oh! that word—Tazoni looking at her with a passionate pride and love that set her trembling when her beautiful eyes met it.

Before them are the mothers.

Says Lady Dartagle, weeping:

"My darling, Heaven has been good to us!"

Says Lady Northcliffe, as she embraces the blushing bride:

"Florence, keep this for my sake," and she swiftly unfastens a chain from her neck and fastens it round the neck of the girl.

There is a locket attached, and Florence opens it. It is a portrait of Tazoni. She raises it to her lips and kisses it.

Tazoni is almost jealous of it, but he has a little surprise, and produces from his travelling cloak an old box.

"Mother," he says, "Florence has a little keepsake for you. It is here; open it."

Lady Northcliffe opens it and starts with amazed delight.

"The Northcliffe jewels! My dear boy, how did you get them?"

"Ask Hitchem," he retorts, laughing and kissing her.

Then, as Lord Harry calls out that their two carriages are waiting, the last embrace is exchanged and the two heroes carry off their brides.

Ring out, mad, joyous bells, and be ye prophets of a life-long happiness for them all!

THE END.





[VIOLA INDIGNANT.]

**WINIFRED WYNNE;**  
OR,  
**THE GOLDSMITH'S DAUGHTER.**  
BY THE AUTHOR OF  
*"The Lost Coronet," "One Sparkle of Gold,"* etc.

## CHAPTER XIII.

A good that never satisfied the mind,  
A beauty fading like the April flower,  
A sweet with floods of gall that soon combined,  
A pleasure passing ere in thought made ours,  
A servile lot decked with a pompous name,  
Are the strange ends we toll for here below,  
Till wisest death makes us our errors know.

"**LORD CLARENCE!** Is it possible?" exclaimed Viola Lisle, playfully holding up her hands in real or affected astonishment. "I thought you were at Hampton Court, or at least half-way there by this time. You certainly told us so last night."

"Did you think I could coolly take my departure even for a few days without ascertaining whether you had suffered from your terrible alarm?" replied the young nobleman, with an accent that might easily be construed into tenderness by a girl less confident in her own attractions than the fair daughter of the Lisles. She shook her head in arch gravity.

"A very flattering speech, my lord; but I suspect if I had a magic glass I should have seen your horse standing at the door of another mansion before you came hither. There, you had better make a true Catholic confession," she added, archly. "I have the means of learning the facts and finding you out in—what shall I call it?—a bad memory."

"In anything but treachery to your shrine, fair queen," returned the young man, with the deferential hyperbole of the age. "The very suspicion is sufficient punishment."

"Well, disprove the accusation then," she replied, gaily. "Tell me if I am not correct in my second-sight."

"When can you have been wrong?" he returned, gallantly, "unless in distrusting your own charms. But please to enlighten my dull brains. Inform me where I am supposed to have bent my course, instead of flying here on the swift pinions of anxiety for your health and spirits."

"What if the Lady Churchill's was nearer to your dwelling?" laughed the girl, her eyes glancing eagerly at his face as she spoke. "Surely you must have been more alarmed for the two heroines of last night than for my quiet self. Unluckily," she added, "I never

had any taste for being conspicuous, though it is very interesting no doubt."

"I have no admiration for the bold attempts which generally betoken a despair of achieving attraction," returned Lord Clarence. "To say truth, however, I did call to ask for the last report of your friend, Mistress Viola. I thought you would be gratified to learn that the Countess Sybil was not in more serious danger than the damage, for a time at any rate, to her former beauty."

Viola's eyes flashed involuntarily.

"Yes. I know you could not have existed many hours without tidings of your partner of last night," she said, gaily. "My mother is there, I believe, by this time to learn her state, and I suppose you ought not to have been admitted in her absence, sir knight."

"I humbly acknowledge the favour. It was by some special exception, I will flatter myself," he continued, in the same tone.

"No, no, certainly not. I quite forgot, and I daresay Lady Lisle forgot to forbid it," she said, archly. "But tell me," she went on, "do you not think Sibyl de Courcy very beautiful?"

"No," he replied, firmly, "I do not. She is, I think, romantic, singular looking; not beautiful in my idea of the word."

"Not so pretty as the plebeian protégée of Lady Churchill?" resumed Viola. "I could perceive you were powerfully attracted by her during that unlucky minute."

The young man could not repress a guilty flush at the random but significant words. But he quickly recovered his self-possession.

"Perhaps," he said, "I may have been drawn towards the—I mean to Lady Churchill's ward, but from very different feelings to what you suppose. I was astonished rather than attracted by the anomaly I saw."

"And what was that?" asked the girl, opening her pretty eyes to the utmost. "Lord Clarence, you are so terribly mystical. I really am quite frightened."

"Oh, it was very simple and obvious," he said. "A very strange sight for a tradesman's daughter to be the acknowledged protégée of one of our proudest dames, and actually dancing and talking with a man who is descended from an ancient family and occupies a much higher position than myself. Was not that enough to make me try to comprehend the witchcraft, Mistress Viola?"

"Oh, I am not clever enough to understand all those niceties," she said, impatiently. "However, I suppose it is finished now. She is to return home; and I don't suppose we shall ever see her again."

"Yet you and she were friends, were you not?" he asked, half reproachfully. "It is not so very long since I met you and her for the first time, you were riding together in close intimacy then."

"What a contradictory person you are, Lord Clarence," laughed Viola, constrainedly. "Why, just now you were condemning any familiar intimacy with Winifred as a deadly sin, and now you are scandalized that I do not claim her as my dear friend. But, to make you happy, I can tell you that it was only as children my mother permitted us to be playmates, and the memorable ride to which you allude was by Lady Churchill's arrangement, not hers nor mine."

"I am an insolent varlet to dare to question any action or feeling of yours," he said, flattered by the eager vindication in his opinion of the lovely girl. "But it was your own graceful railery that led me on to be such a meddler. Can you forgive me, sweet Viola?" he went on, with a look of real, interested tenderness that she most perfectly comprehended.

"Perhaps, yes; on one condition," she whispered, softly.

"And that?" he asked. "It must indeed be a hard one to which I would not consent for such a boon."

"That you will not be so quick to misunderstand," she said, more lightly. "I hate to think that my friends are blaming and watching what I do; I am a great deal too giddy to stand such close scrutiny."

"Say rather that you are too good and innocent for any blame not to be unjust," returned the young man. "It were indeed tyranny to subject a bright fairy to the laws of common mortals."

"Silly Lord Clarence!" she exclaimed. "There, I hear the coach! you must not make any more such flattering speeches or my mother will banish you forthwith from my companionship as a dangerous aider and abettor to my unmanageable self."

"An enviable post, one that I may perhaps claim one day," he said, lifting the girl's small hand to his lips with an eager warmth that brought the blood to her young face.

But he had only time to drop it from his clasp as the stately step of the Lady Lisle was heard, and the dignified peeress came quietly forward into the room.

"Well, Viola, I find——" she began, but her words

seemed arrested by the sudden apparition before her eyes of the unexpected guest. "Well, my lord, how came this?" she said, extending a finger towards him with a reproachful shake of the head. "Do you suppose that high-born maidens are left to their own devices, like citizens' daughters, to receive or meet company as they like?"

The young man did not appear daunted by the reproof. Perhaps he fancied there was a counterbalancing smile in the eyes and the lips of the speaker.

"Nay, dear lady, surely circumstances may be exceptional and control all; and when you remember the startling tragedy of last night surely you cannot wonder I made a daring raid on your saloons this morning. Pray what tidings do you bring of the sufferer—the young countess, I mean?" he went on, lightly.

"Oh, she is better. I am almost inclined to believe she was scarcely so severely injured," returned Lady Lisle, carelessly. "If there is any danger, it is to her beauty, not her life, and the whole affair will be forgotten ere long—it will and so ignominiously as to excitement. I, for one, should be very much scandalized for my daughter to put herself so prominently forward, though I know there are some very unscrupulous attempts made for such notoriety."

"Well, if the end of the attempt is a scarred face and damaged hair, it will certainly not be an encouraging triumph," returned Clarence, lightly. "But, unhappily, the times are too eventful to bestow much consideration on these gayer and sweeter subjects, Lady Lisle, and, if the Lady Churchill may be believed as well as common reports, there will not be much marrying or love-making either till all good subjects have combined to join the authorities that will put the Princess Anne on the throne."

"Hush, hush!" said the lady, holding her finger before her lips in token of warning. "To set out encore vivant. It were treason to plan for the events of his death; and, as to the Princess Anne, surely there can be no difficulty in placing her upon the throne of her father."

The young nobleman raised his eyebrows.

"Verbum sap, Lady Lisle," he said, smilingly. "I wish to betray neither my friends nor my foes, but it is safe enough to agree that love and war are both in a somewhat troubled state at the present in this unlucky land, and so adieu, fair ladies, and may your benison be on my unworthy head, whether present or absent."

And, with a gay and gallant salute, the young man hastened from the room.

Lady Lisle watched till he was pretty well out of sight, and then turned from the window to her daughter.

"He is a graceful horseman, and no despicable cavalier in all outward points, Viola," she said, fixing her eyes on her daughter with a sharp glance that would pierce her very thoughts. "But, my daughter, you are not to suppose my choice has fallen on him for your husband. In the first place, your father's return home may not be so long delayed; and, besides, it is a doubt in my mind whether I should permit the alliance in the present state of affairs."

"And pray, why not, madam?" said the girl, proudly. "You have already given quite sufficient encouragement to my entertaining such an idea; and I will not be thus played with without some good reason being given for the change. Lord Clarence is handsome and well born and rich. What can you want more for your daughter?" she continued, tapping her little foot, round which the thread of her tating work had been bound, and breaking it in her sharp violence.

"That is just the point, foolish girl," returned Lady Lisle, calmly. "I am by no means so certain that Clarence Seymour will inherit the wealth he expects. And, if not, or if it be endangered by the troubles of the times, I certainly do not mean to give you to a handsome spendthrift, the more especially as you will not inherit sufficient fortune for both, Viola. That is as well for you to know at once," she added, determinately.

A gloomy frown settled on Viola's young brow.

"Then I suppose you will leave him to marry that detestable girl, Winifred Wynne—is that it, mamma?—and get her father's gold cups and gold pieces along with his low-born wife?"

"Viola, be quiet on such a subject," said the mother, warmly. "The very thought should not be allowed to come into your mind, much less to be given in words. I tell you that there is not a prouder race in all England than the Seymours, and Clarence would as soon pour ink into his veins

as take the goldsmith's daughter for his wife. If there were any danger of the girl clashing with your claims to conquest, Viola, it were far more likely that Lady Churchill would draw Cecil Vernon into the degrading snare."

Viola sprang to her feet with a scornful cry of surprise.

"I do not admire your penetration, my lady mother," she said, sarcastically. "Why, Sir Cecil Vernon has been at my very call and beck since I was a child at the juvenile revels, where we used to meet. I could bring him to my very feet by one glance of encouragement. Winifred win Cecil! the very idea is a jest, mother," she went on, with a contemptuous laugh.

"Child, you are far too presumptuous for your years," returned Lady Lisle, gravely. "You are perhaps spoiled and pampered into vanity by my indulgence that will be of no little detriment to your success. But remember that men are wayward in their tastes and fancies, Viola, and beautiful as you are there is no greater spell than beauty, and that is fascination in some cases and wealth in others," she said, significantly. "I know the world better than you do, and I can see that Winifred Wynne possesses both, while Lady Churchill's infatuation has added to it gentle breeding and training. She is no despicable rival, Viola; better let her be pushed into obscurity and forgotten, if any device can accomplish that, than pretend to despise one who, when too late, you may find has snatched away your lover, even before you were aware that they were not hopelessly under your spells."

And Lady Lisle walked from the room to stave herself of her visiting dress before Viola had recovered from the unpleasant astonishment of the maternal warning and prediction.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

"Winifred, what does all this mean?" asked Gervase Wynne, when, after a silent and on his daughter's part suffering transit from the lordly mansion of the Churchills to his modest dwelling, he was at last alone with his child in the family sitting-room.

The girl's pale looks and bandaged hand, her startled, fawn-like glance and unconscious shiver in her low chair, might well have pleaded her cause from any questioning at that moment. But Gervase more than carried out the stern habits of the age and his peculiar class where parental authority was concerned.

"I do not understand you, dear father," she at length faltered out. "If you speak of those trifling injuries," she added, with a wan smile, "it was a simple accident. One of Lady Churchill's guests caught fire accidentally. She was dancing in the same minut with myself, and I was lucky enough to prevent her from being frightfully burnt. That is all."

"And more than enough, my daughter, even were it all," repeated Gervase, gravely. "It is a sore wrong to me for my only child to risk her life and her limbs and usefulness, to say nothing of such well-favoured looks as Nature may have given to her, and for the sake of a distant and a graceless stranger in station and even in race. But I doubt whether there is not more to be confessed, whether I have not more to complain of and to fear now that you are returned to your natural home and sphere of life. There is something unnatural in your look and manner, Winifred, that speaks of some secret doubts and alarm. That should not be the feeling of a maiden on returning to her father's house," he added.

Winifred did not colour at the charge. As yet no tangible or actual feeling such as usually stains a maiden's cheek with mantling blush was consciously cherished in her heart.

But still the pained, sad look in her eyes and quivering of her lips spoke of some echoing response to the demand made by her father on her honour and her duty.

"No, dear father," she said, at last, "there is no such cause, none. If I display the manner you speak of, it is but from all being so novel and yet so familiar to me. I shall be quite content ere long and try to fulfil every duty to the utmost that you may demand of me."

"That sounds well to the ear, but it has scarcely the ring of the true metal in it, Winifred," said the goldsmith, meaningly, perhaps adopting the simile from his calling. "However, I will hope that the evil influence of the past may be set right after a brief space. It was perhaps the only error that your deceased mother ever made during her married life, but

there was danger in it to you and to me that cannot easily be repaired."

Winifred's head was raised proudly at the words. In spite of her mental and bodily suffering she could not bear the slightest word lavished on the mother whose name she idolized.

"It was enough in my judgment that it was my mother's wish to ensure its wisdom and kindness, father," she said, firmly, "and the Lady Churchill's teaching was ever intended to strengthen that belief."

Gervase Wynne's brow darkened ominously. He scarcely could venture to quarrel with his daughter's filial devotion and yet he was jealously indignant of its absorbing intensity.

"The Lady Churchill would have done well if she had gone a step farther, Winifred, and taught you submission to myself as well as respect for your married parent. But, in any case, I shall know how to enforce it. And first I would give you to understand," he went on, "that you are now to mingle with persons of your own rank and standing in the world, and forget all the falsehood and glare of the puppet among whom you have been living. Let them go their own way—you have no more to do with them. Henceforth you will only be the goldsmith's daughter, child of one respectable citizen, and destined wife of a son."

Winifred shivered, but she did not venture to reply at that moment. So she wisely ignored the hint.

"But I cannot forget that Lady Churchill is my relative and godmother, and my most kind friend. You could not desire to teach me ingratitude, father," she remonstrated, firmly.

"Ah, there is the old leaven, the curse of those who create hang on to the very fringes of the nobles, who would except the very dregs of their notice, the humblest place in their halls to be able to claim such kindred," said the goldsmith, sternly.

"However, to put this matter for ever at rest, my daughter, I will give you my directions at once for your future conduct, and which I shall expect you to observe to the letter," he went on, after a slight pause. "I shall not forbid the Lady Churchill from being admitted should she be inclined to visit you occasionally here, which I do not anticipate, for great ladies do not admire city streets and modest dwellings, and plain, honest housekeepers like ourselves. And once in each three months you have my permission to spend a day with her, should she receive you alone, without other company—that is, until you are married, when of course all will be changed."

"That will be long—long first," exclaimed the girl, unable longer to preserve her self-control. "You cannot think of it at my age. And you would not send your only child away from you so soon. Father, promise that you will not," she said, clasp her un injured hand in his in eager entreaty.

"This passion is unnecessary, Winifred—at least, if only from the reason you would state," he returned, with a sadder but not more yielding air than he had before assumed. "You were content to be away from me while at Lady Churchill's great mansion, but you are in a terrible distemperature lest you should go to the house of a loyal and an honest man as his honoured wife. However, you need not fear; you will not be separated from me, you will not even leave your childhood's home. The husband I have chosen for you will be content to come and take up his abode in our dwelling, instead of your repairing to his own."

Winifred's eyes were riveted on her father, as if demanding yet more precise intelligence. Perhaps she deemed it better, poor girl, to ascertain the worst.

"You can guess the name, I would imagine," said her father, after a few seconds' silence. "I had not meant to inform you of it so soon, but perhaps it is better that there should be no concealment and that you can have no pretext for disobedience to my wishes. The man I have selected for you is the old companion of your childhood, who has for years looked upon you as his future wife," he went on, with an almost defiant decision of tone.

"Not Adrian Meister, no—no—no, do not say that. Please tell me I am mistaken," she wailed rather than spoke.

"And why not?" he replied, frowning. "Whom could you wish more than a man that you have known intimately from your childhood, whom I esteem as an honourable and worthy citizen, and who will secure and increase the wealth I have amassed? If you have any other fancies or hopes you had better at once dismiss them without delay. I will not even listen to an argument or a prayer on such a head. No worthless spendthrift shall wed my heiress."



"No—no—I do not desire it, I would not even ask it," she said, fervently. "I only desire to be left in peace and with you, father. Do not ask anything more, at least not yet. I could not even think of Adrian Meister for a husband, it is impossible."

"It shall be done, it is my pleasure, and I will not have any disputing my will where my own child is in question," said the goldsmith, determinately. "You have yet to learn that I brook no opposition, that I insist on being obeyed, Winifred."

The girl's head drooped on her bosom. "Father, in all else you shall never find any hesitation on my part," she said, earnestly. "It shall be my delight to study your will, to make you happy, to devote myself to your pleasure. But not this, not this. It were a deadly sin. I dare not. I would rather die, rather lie by my beloved mother's side in her lonely vault, than stand at the altar with Adrian Meister."

Gervase Wyand looked at her with half-astonished contempt.

"Foolish child! You will soon learn wisdom, and forget all this senseless fancy."

"Never," she said, in a tone that might well have spoken to the very core of her father's heart. "I know myself better; I shall never change. I would endure anything rather than commit so dreadful a crime."

"Fshaw! nonsense—girlish folly!" he returned, in a tone which had some disgust in it. "It will all wear off when you have been in our work-a-day world for some little space. Harken, Winifred! I would prefer that you should obey my will in all willingness and content, and for that object you shall have every reasonable delay in order to get over this childish whim, but not to attempt to avoid finally the wedding. Remember, only the death of one of us can alter that," he said, with compressed lips and a frowning brow that well might crush the poor, suffering girl into the despairing apathy which would for the moment have overpowered all her brave nerves.

But it soon passed away.

"I am your daughter, father, and I have been trained in my duty from early childhood," she said. "I will do my utmost, but not where there would be sin and shame in yielding. No word of love shall pierce my ears if I have power to stop it, and I will never willingly allow Adrian Meister to dream of me as a wife," she added, firmly.

Gervase ground his very teeth in anger. He did not see his way so clear before him as he expected.

It was a risk to challenge his child's obedience so early in her residence with him.

Even Adrian Meister might take alarm, and retire altogether from the field.

It might perhaps be considered an actual mania for the wealthy goldsmith to preserve such an anxious determination to carry out a marriage that had little to recommend it in comparison with the beauty and the wealth of the bride-elect.

But to a man of his temper it was enough that he had arranged it, and that a failure in the accomplishment of his will would be simply disgrace and annoyance that he could not brook.

"You are talking like a silly, romantic child, Winifred," he said, "and as your health is not very perfect after the accident you have sustained I will give you the benefit of supposing that you will display more sense and more submission when this fever fit has passed. But in return I shall insist on your showing the most perfect courtesy and gentleness to your future husband, albeit I will request him to suspend all mere personal topics for a season."

"It is a great boon which I am extending, and I shall look for a corresponding return," he added.

"You will never have to complain of any want of courtesy where your guests are in question, unless I should be driven to it, father," said the girl, in a voice that betokened faintness and suffering, "and now may I go to my room?"

Gervase could not refuse. It would have been actual cruelty to prevent the required repose, and he touched a silver handbell on the table as he bowed his head in assent.

"You had better go to bed and remain there till the morn," he said, more kindly, "and if the physician be needed for you he shall be sent for forthwith."

"No, no, no; only rest. That is all I want. I shall be well soon, except perhaps these scars," she replied, glanced at her bandaged hand and arm, "and these will heal in a few days."

Poor Winifred! there was a surer balm for these traces of her bravery than for her wounded and bruised heart.

The kindly Dorcas conducted her to the sleeping apartment and assisted her to undress and seek her bed.

But no cordials, no soothing could cheer nor calm the sorrow and tumult of the young heart which had just been torn from its very moorings and received so rude a blast for its future destination in life's course.

## CHAPTER XV.

"Well, sweet lady, are you really recovering from your terrible injuries?" asked Lord Clarence Seymour some days after the catastrophe which had so unjoyously ended Lady Churchill's fate, and laid the foundation of many friendships and of enmities in the time to come.

He had with some difficulty obtained permission to see the invalid, and indeed had it not been that he urged a kind of participation in the accident that had happened he could scarcely have made his way, under Lady Churchill's patronage, to the sitting-room to which Sybil had been removed. Perhaps the young countess had never looked more lovely than in that time of sickness and pain that had softened the proud haughtiness that was habitual to her very race and gave a sweet refinement to her every look and feature.

"Thank you, you are very kind, my lord, I am much better. I suppose I really am recovering more rapidly than my foolishness deserves," she said, softly.

"It must have been some fault of mine," he rejoined, quickly; "I ought to have taken better heed of such a precious charge."

The customary hyperbole of the day was far too flowery for such words to bring a flush to the cheek of the beautiful young countess, and yet she did crimson for a brief moment.

"Unless you were waiting in the correct figure, I can hardly think that can be the case, Lord Clarence," interposed Lady Churchill, approaching the invalid. "And that could hardly be possible when you and the countess both learnt the dance in that country of grace and gaiety—France."

Sybil gave a bright smile now.

"Ah, Lady Churchill, it is cheering to hear you praise my dear country, where I hope so soon to find myself. It seems to me that you English have a sad distrust of the nation who have been so ready to receive your kings when you have driven them from their throne."

Lady Churchill fairly laughed, though she was fain to give a reproachful shake of the head to the daring young foreigner.

"Terrible little rebel, how dare you talk such treason?" she said, "especially before a brave officer of his majesty King William. He will be bound to give information of your bold treachery."

"I should be more likely to protect the speaker of such generous sentiments with my very life," he said. "It is unlucky that the countess should have been saved by a factious adherent of the Dutchman instead," he added, impatiently.

Lady Churchill stamped her pretty foot angrily at his accusation of her protégée.

"Dutch adherent," she repeated, sharply. "Why, Lord Clarence, if you allude to my god-daughter, Winifred Wynne, by that epithet, you are simply talking libellous nonsense. Why, do you not know that when she was a child she—"

But what had been Winifred Wynne's deed as a child was doomed to remain in oblivion to her auditors, for at that moment the door opened and her maid appeared with a packet in her hand.

"If you please, my lady, a messenger has just brought this, and it requires a reply, he says. Will you look at it and tell me your pleasure, my lady?"

The Lady Churchill glanced at the direction, and a flash came from her eyes.

"Yes, tell him to wait. I shall not detain him. Lord Clarence, your pardon for five minutes. I shall return by that time," and she followed Abigail Masham from the room, leaving the young pair in dangerous vicinity and solitude.

"Do you really believe I am so opposed to the cause you seem to espouse so warmly?" said the young nobleman, after a brief pause.

"How am I to tell? You are a soldier of the Dutch king—I can but suppose you fight for his cause," she said, eagerly.

"I have fought for my country—not for this especial sovereign," he said, evasively. "And even were I to have preferred the daughter to the father of the Stuart dynasty I owe no love and owe no allegiance, now that Mary is dead, to her alien husband. It will be all different for Princess Anne when she comes to the throne."

"But there is another heir, Lord Clarence, the noble boy who is now in exile from the country where he was born, but which he never knew," exclaimed the girl, impetuously. "Prince James, or rather, as he should be called, the Prince of Wales," she added, fervently, "is our rightful king, before his sisters by every law."

Lord Clarence could not forbear a smile, though the flushed cheek and brilliant eyes, to which excitement lent some of their former bloom and brightness, gave him an idea of the depth and intensity of the girl's feelings on the subject, which seemed so little in accordance with her age and beauty and even suffering at that moment.

"He has a fair and fascinating advocate," he replied, "but, sweet countess, do you not think from your very knowledge of our people that it were well nigh a hopeless cause to snatch the crown from Princess Anne, whom the people love and trust, to give it to a child they have never seen, and whose father they drove from the land?"

"I know nothing but one thing, and that is that you are treacherous and wrong in what you do, and that noble and generous spirits will risk all for the right and the good," she returned. "Ah, it was so in the old days, Lord Clarence, and though I am a Frenchwoman in descent my grandmother was lady to poor Henrietta Maria, Charles I.'s queen, and from her descend to me the love and devotion to the Stuarts' cause, though they are not of my own nation and land."

Perhaps no possible charm could have exercised such power over Clarence Seymour as the mingled enthusiasm and loyalty and high birth of this young girl, and by some singular association his thoughts reverted to and drew a comparison between her and the plebeian Winifred Wynne, with her Dutch connexions and presumed tastes; pity that she should have proved herself so brave—pity that she should possess such nameless and yet irresistible fascination, where such crushing anguish existed in herself and in her history.

But these thoughts flashed over his mind too speedily even for Sybil to notice that any pause hindered his reply.

"Yours is the spirit that makes heroes, Countess Sybil," he returned. "Where such are the feelings and the courage of the women it were next to impossible that the men of their family or their children hang back from action."

"Oh, these are but vain, empty compliments," said the girl, impatiently; "it is easy to talk, but we want noble deeds, not sweet speeches, in those we care for."

She stopped herself abruptly.

Not only the very sound of her own words but the sudden glance of pleasure in his face recalled her to the sense of what she had implied. And a somewhat embarrassing crisis might have taken place had not Clarence, tired of waiting, come to her aid.

"You are right, Countess Sybil," he said, calmly, as if ignoring any application of her words. "It is scarcely worthy of the present time for men to talk while shrinking from action. But there are many drawbacks, many hindrances that you cannot even suspect, and that delay if not prevent any rapid action in such important matters," he went on, in a more serious and dignified tone than she had ever yet known him assume.

"No, no," she said, enthusiastically, "that cannot be. If the heart is willing and the conscience clear there can be no cause for hesitation when honour and loyalty and duty call. Lord Clarence, is it some fancied impediment that would hold you back if your blood flowed quick and generously in your veins?"

He smiled sadly, admiringly, doubtfully, as he shook his head in quiet dissent.

And at the moment the Lady Churchill's voice was heard speaking to some one without, and the girl sank back on her pillow exhausted by the effort that had for the time made her forget at once her sufferings and her weakness.

"Come, I must send you away, Lord Clarence," Lady Churchill said, as she marked her patient's languid pathos. "It was thoughtless of me to leave you to be entertained by the countess in her weak state, but I was detained much longer than I expected. There, go away, you have done quite mischief enough already," she added, holding out her hand to the young nobleman with a peremptory sign to depart.

Still Clarence lingered.

There was a spell in the Lady Churchill's house that seemed to chain him to her neighbourhood

though he himself would have been perplexed to define its precise nature.

"Then I may return to compensate for your summary dismissal, Lady Churchill, may I not?" he said, as he prepared to obey. "You will allow me to be admitted when I present myself to learn the progress of your patient?"

"Perhaps; that will depend on yourself and on circumstances," said the lady. "It is possible that I shall be absent for a day or two now that the countess can be removed to Lady Lisle's," she added, accompanying her visitor from the room almost, as it seemed, mechanically, though there might be some purpose in the privacy thus obtained.

"Indeed, and so soon!" exclaimed Clarence.

"Winifred Wynne was taken away by her father on the very day after the accident," remarked the lady, significantly. "Only, perhaps, as she is not entirely of noble birth, she is less precious and less susceptible than the spoiled children of luxury and tenderness."

Clarence flushed, though it was equally mysterious and provoking to himself why he should betray any interest in the goldsmith's daughter or her entourage.

"She will scarcely want attention in her father's house, I imagine," he replied, carelessly. "And if report speaks truly the citizens of London have far more wealth at their command than we poor nobles."

"Oh, she will not lack gold, though her beauty and charms scarcely need such gilding," returned Lady Churchill. "And if I could but carry out my wishes for her, it would be a very excellent adjustment of the good things of this life for her money to repair the ravages that loyalty has made in Cecil Vernon's fortunes. But I am very despairing as to my power with her Puritan father to allow such an alliance."

"And I should think Vernon might have as many scruples on his side," returned Clarence, sharply. "However, that is not my affair. Is it unfair prying to ask what the real state of things at the palace may be just now, Lady Churchill?"

The lady laid her finger on her lips.

"Hush," she said, "you speak as if it concerned the life of one of your comrades, instead of the destinies of a nation. But if you can keep counsel, I do not object to whisper the real truth. In less than twenty-four hours," she exclaimed, drawing him into the recess of a deep window and bending her lips to his ear, "the crown will have changed possessors, or, rather, he who now holds it will be no more an earthly monarch."

"And who will wear it then?" returned Clarence, in the same tone.

Lady Churchill raised her eyebrows significantly.

"Of course there ought to be but one reply—but one carrying out of the nation's will," she answered, "but who can decide on the wayward feelings of parties at this time? To speak truth, my lord sends me warning that there is great excitement at St. Germain's since this news has been known, and I need scarcely tell you what may be the result of such wild hopes."

"Are they 'wild,' are they unfounded?" said the young man, gravely; "that is the point, dear lady, and there may be very different answers to the question."

Lady Churchill shook her head.

"One might almost fancy that little Jacobite upstairs had been influencing you, Lord Clarence, but though I am not young and lovely enough to contend with her in a cavalier's ideas I may lay claim to a little more age and prudence and experience than Sybil de Courcy. And, mark me, my friend, the true wisdom even for those she cares for best is patience and conciliation. Princess Anne has no children, she has warmer and more natural affections than her sister, and it may very well happen that the working out of such instincts may be a surer game for the exiles than more rash and chivalrous efforts. But 'face' is the word, and I have already perhaps trusted you more than a wise woman ought to confide in one so young and rash."

(To be continued.)

**A ROMANTIC EPISODE.**—Recently a young lady fell into the river Calne, and would have been drowned but for the heroic rescue of a young man, who swam with his fair charge to the bank, amidst the hearty cheers of the lookers-on. The young couple, very little the worse for the recent ducking, were escorted by an admiring crowd to the nearest hotel, when the hero was rewarded by being entertained at a party in honour of the happy termination of what might have been a very lamentable affair. Complimentary speeches and high encomiums were

showered on the "Non of the evening." But the greatest honour of all was in store for him: The happy father, in the presence of the blushing maiden, offered him her hand and 500*l*. This unlooked-for and spontaneous act of generosity evoked general satisfaction, and the guests were considerably disappointed when the gallant rescuer, after thanking the gentleman for his kind offer, said that, although he should be glad to meet Miss ——— again as a friend, he certainly could not accept her hand. What actuated him in this decision does not appear to be known.

## HUNTED FOR HER MONEY.

### CHAPTER IX.

As the false Miss Bermyngham had acknowledged to herself, she dreaded a meeting with Lady Follitt, the aunt of the real Miss Bermyngham, as the crucial test of her pretensions.

Lady Follitt might be a shrewd, keen-eyed woman of the world, who would detect the imposture at a glance.

There might have been some especial feature of the true Nereia Bermyngham—some family trait that had early developed itself in her—which the aunt might look for, and, failing to discover it, she might have her suspicions aroused to the truth.

And then, too, the impostor had desired to get settled into her new character, to become used to her stolen position, her life of ease, her costly attire, her jewels, before making the acquaintance of Lady Follitt. Even the twenty-four hours additional which she believed she had secured to herself seemed of inestimable value to her.

It may be imagined, therefore, that the abrupt announcement of Lady Follitt's arrival at the hotel—the entrance of the baroness into her very presence—struck dismay to her soul.

She was staring into the long mirror, admiring her costly toilet and renovated and improved beauty, as we have described, when Lady Follitt was ushered into her room.

As the words of the hotel porter struck upon her startled sense of hearing she wheeled about and faced the intruder with a sudden sickening sense of terror.

The moment of her trial had come. Upon the reception accorded her by Lady Follitt depended her whole future life. Should the baroness accept her without suspicion as the true Nereia Bermyngham a life of wealth, luxury, splendour, would be assured to the impostor. She would have all the good things of this life in profusion; she could make a grand marriage; she would be fêted, honoured and courted.

But should the baroness discover her imposture what would be her fate? Poverty, toil and hardships—perhaps a prison! Her past life would be raked up—and there was hidden in her past a dark and fearful mystery which she would rather die than have uncovered.

Her fate then depended on Lady Follitt. In her great excitement and suspense her heart seemed to stand still in her bosom. Despite the daring part she was playing she was essentially a coward. Had it not been for the enamelling upon her face her complexion would have shown white as death.

As it was, the pretty milk-and-roses colouring did not alter, of course, but the girl's black eyes dilated and her innocent-looking face seemed to express a dozen emotions all at once. She stood as if transfixed. But, regaining her presence of mind almost upon the instant, she gave utterance to a little shriek and sprang forward, crying out:

"My dear aunt, my dear, dear Aunt Follitt!"

The baroness met her half-way and clasped her in a close embrace.

"My dear child!" she exclaimed, showering kisses upon the fair, false face of the impostor. "My precious little niece! I am so glad to see you, darling. Welcome home to England!"

Her tears fell upon the usurper's cheeks. The false Miss Bermyngham hastened to brush them away with her cobweb handkerchief before any damage could be done to her complexion.

The baroness gently put the girl from her at arm's length, keeping a close grasp upon her, and studied her face with devouring eyes.

How innocent and sweet and loving that face seemed—so dazzling in its milk-and-white prettiness, so apparently artless, so childishly appealing in its expression, with its hard black eyes softened and shaded by the long eyelashes, with the rich yellow hair creped and dishevelled in fashionable style! The girl seemed utterly guileless. Her looks and manner were cloyingly sweet. She was like a soft, purring white kitten, gentle, caressing and clinging.

Without a word Lady Follitt drew the girl to her heart again, and again the two embraced.

Presently the impostor drew the baroness to a seat upon the sofa before the fire and took a place beside her, fondling Lady Follitt's gloved hands in her own jewelled fingers.

"This is such a surprise—such a delightful surprise!" exclaimed the false Miss Bermyngham, in a pretended impulsiveness, a gushing sort of way that was certainly very pretty and charming. "But why did you come to London to meet me? I should have gone on to Follitt Court to-morrow. I meant to spare you all trouble."

"As if coming to meet you were a trouble!" cried the baroness. "My dear child, you should have telegraphed me from Paris, that I might have been here in waiting to receive you. Did you think I would have allowed you to come to the very doors of my house as a stranger might have done, to receive a formal greeting at my threshold? You are the child of my only sister. You are the nearest relative I have in the world. You have come to be the darling of my old age, I hope, Nereia. I know that I shall love you."

"And I love you already, dear Aunt Follitt!" cried the girl. "But let me remove your bonnet. I want to see if you have changed any since I last saw you."

With her own hands the impostor removed Lady Follitt's bonnet and scarf. Her black eyes took in a keen survey of her visitor.

The baroness was about fifty years of age, tall and stately, with a remarkably noble presence. Her eyes were blue and keen, her forehead massive, her complexion still fair and unwrinkled. Her thick hair was gray, and was drawn away from her brows in heavy waves.

There was an air of command about her that impressed the usurper. She was habitually haughty it would seem, but there were vast possibilities of tenderness beneath that cold and calm exterior, as the girl had already discovered.

"Well, do you find me changed, Nereia?" asked the lady, with a smile. "I hardly expected you to remember me."

"How could I forget you, dear Aunt Follitt?" cried the impostor, reproachfully. "Those weeks I passed at Follitt Court were among the brightest of my life. I was eight years old at the time, you know. You have scarcely changed, only you look somewhat older. Your hair was not gray then," ventured the girl.

"No, it was not," said the baroness, with a sigh. "And so you remember me, Nereia! I have not changed perhaps, but you have changed greatly. You are small, as I expected to find you. In fact, you are a perfect little fairy! And you have the blonde looks of your mother's family, but you have the Bermyngham black eyes. It is odd, but I have always had the impression that you had inherited your mother's blue eyes."

"An odd impression," laughed the impostor. "You saw so little of me, Aunt Follitt, even in my childhood, that I wonder you remember even the colour of my skin. You know that I was always in the nursery during my fortnight at Follitt Court, except when I was brought in after dinner at the dessert, and that you were absorbed with gay company. And yet," added the girl, "I fancy I have heard that my eyes were lighter in colour when I was a child. If such a thing were possible, I should say they had deepened into black since I went out to India. But of course that is impossible!" and she laughed.

"You are remarkably pretty, my dear," said the baroness, with a sort of fond pride in her regards. "Your hair is of a peculiar golden tint which is singularly rich. Your face looks as if, to use a worn expression, you had always been fed upon milk and roses. You will create a sensation down in Lincolnshire, I can assure you."

Lady Follitt did not once think of calling her pretended niece a beauty, for her standard of beauty was exalted and demanded a nobler, grander type. But she thought her, as she had said, remarkably pretty, although in her secret soul she could not but acknowledge to herself that that prettiness was after a very pronounced order.

Were it not for the girl's seeming innocence and shrinking modesty, for her kitten-like clinging and caressing, she might have deemed her appearance bordering upon boldness.

For a fastidious taste the false Miss Bermyngham's hair was too ruddy in its yellow tinting, the roses in her cheeks were too fixed and unvarying, the whiteness of her skin too marble-like, but the artist had done her work well, and one could not suspect that nature herself had not given to the usurper richness of colouring.

Taken altogether, with her artistically got-up face, her drooping eyelids, her modest, clinging ways, her pretty, childish impulsiveness, her soft caressing, the false Miss Bermyngham was a dangerous woman.



a dazzling fraud, fair and sweet to look upon, like the fabled apples of the Dead Sea; but, like those apples, rotten to the core.

"I hope I shall create a sensation down in Lincolnshire," said the impostor, with seeming artlessness. "And I am glad, dear Aunt Follitt, that you think me pretty. For beauty brings love, and I could not live without love."

She pressed one of the baroness's hands against her cheek and to her lips.

"My dear child," cried Lady Follitt, flushing with a quick rush of feeling, "who could help loving you? You were made to pet and love. How strange that I expected to find you plain and insignificant in appearance. But that was because you so persistently refused to send me your photograph. And all the while you were as pretty and charming as a fairy. And now, dear, tell me all about yourself. Why have you persisted in remaining in India since your father's death? That idea of yours that you had inherited his disease of the heart is all sheerest nonsense. You have pushed through from Marseilles without stopping—and such a journey would exhaust even me—yet here you are as blooming as a rose."

"I have borne the journey better than I expected, Aunt Follitt. I was sure that I had inherited papa's heart disease," said the impostor, "and I do have the strangest pains at my heart now and then, but I am much better than I thought. The desire to see you, to be clasped in your arms, dear Aunt Follitt, made me rush through France without stopping. Yet when I reached London I was nearly exhausted. I was unable to go on by the first train to Lincolnshire, as I desired. I forgot all my fatigue now in looking upon your dear face. I am repaid for all my haste."

"Have you had any indications of this malady of the heart since you left India?" inquired the baroness, anxiously. "I mean, have you been really ill?"

"Oh, no. I was extremely well throughout the voyage. Indeed, I am becoming convinced that I was mistaken, and that my heart is not diseased at all."

"I am glad to hear it. Your fancy has made me extremely nervous and anxious. Did you leave your friends in India well?"

"Not so well as I could wish," said the usurper. "You know that after papa's death I did not dismiss our servants and close our house, but I maintained my household as before. I engaged a chaperone, however, out of consideration for public opinion. This chaperone was a widowed lady, whose husband had been an army officer. She died a month before I left Calcutta, and I really think that the break in my life caused by her death was the chief cause of my leaving India. Our old friend, Colonel Fordyce, was lying at the point of death when I sailed, and General Graeme will never live to return to England. His liver is completely gone!"

"You wrote me that you would be attended on your journey by your papa's confidential clerk and by a maid," said Lady Follitt. "Are both with you here?"

The impostor put her handkerchief to her eyes.

"A strange fatality has attended me since I left India," she said, in a voice that sounded broken and sorrowful. "It seems as if, like the poet, I never loved anything but it was sure to die. It is only a year since poor papa died, dear Aunt Follitt. After his death I grew to lean upon papa's confidential clerk, Jonas Fisherwick. He was an elderly man, not married, and perfectly devoted to my business interests. Before leaving India some premonition of speedy death seemed to come upon him. He disposed of all my property in India and transferred my funds into the English Consolids, explaining everything to me and putting matters complete within my understanding and under my own personal control. I am twenty-three years of age, you know, Aunt Follitt, and papa trained me so that I might be able to manage my property after he should be taken from me."

"Yes, I know," said Lady Follitt. "But where is Fisherwick?"

His premonitions of evil were realized. He died on the voyage before reaching Suez."

"How shocking! And you were attended during the remainder of your journey only by your maid?" The impostor assented.

"I had an English maid in India," she said—"my old nurse, you know, Aunt Follitt. She was deeply attached to me, but she would not return to England with me. She will live and die in India. Her son is a clerk in the employ of certain tradespeople, and my old nurse will live with him and look after his comfort, he being unmarried."

"Then old Norton is not with you? Did you have a strange woman to attend upon you?"

"Yes, Aunt Follitt. Having made up my mind to come to England, I looked about for a maid to suit me. Finding none, I advertised, stating my require-

ments. Among the applicants for the situation was a girl named Agatha Walden, who came well recommended. I liked her appearance. She was plain in looks, but she knew her place and was anxious to please me. She was ladylike and refined. I suppose that I was imprudent—I am a creature of impulse—but I engaged the girl upon her written recommendations, and she agreed to come with me to England. She was a week in my service at Calcutta, and Norton taught her her new duties. The girl was invaluable to me throughout my journey home, but I discovered on the voyage that she was afflicted with some incurable malady, and that her object in coming to England was that she might die in her native land among her kindred."

"How very sad. Poor girl," said Lady Follitt. "Is she with you still? or has she gone to her friends?"

"How can I tell you all that I have had to bear, dear Aunt Follitt? This girl grew more and more ill as we neared our destination, and she died in the railway carriage just as we steamed into London."

Lady Follitt was shocked. "I suppose that she was buried yesterday," continued the false Miss Beryngham. "I knew nothing of her friends, and I have sometimes feared that she never gave me her real name. So I gave the kind physician whom I summoned to my aid money to bury her decently, and she was so buried, without doubt."

"And you are entirely alone here, my dear child?"

"Oh, no. I have another maid, a French woman, whom I engaged yesterday. I am such a helpless little thing, you know, Aunt Follitt," cooed the pretty hypocrite. "I can't wait upon myself, and I decided to secure a servant before going down into Lincolnshire."

"I hope you have chosen a good, honest person," said Lady Follitt. "You are inexperienced in the ways of the world, my dear. I trust you attended to your maid's references?"

"Thoroughly, Aunt Follitt. I inquired out her past. She's an honest, worthy person, and I know that you will commend my judgment in choosing her. And now, as I have told you all about myself, tell me about yourself. You look well and happy."

"Because I am both," replied Lady Follitt. "My life at Follitt Court is very tranquil and happy. We have a pleasant country society, and if I have at times been lonely I shall be so no longer now that I shall have you for a companion. But, my dear, I am not yet done with questioning you. I have an important question to ask you. You have returned to England to stay. Have you come to me heart-whole?"

And the baroness betrayed in her manner with what anxiety she asked that question.

"Yes, Aunt Follitt, I am heart-whole."

Lady Follitt drew a long breath of relief.

"I have a plan for your future, my dear," she said, kindly. "I have marked out a brilliant destiny for you, one that will ensure your happiness and that will flatter your pride. As I indicated in my letters to you, I have a husband picked out for you. Is there any reason, so far as you are concerned, why you should not marry him?"

The girl dropped her face modestly.

"None whatever," she said, with apparent shyness.

"So much the better. Perhaps I am precipitate in my confidences, Nerea, but I want you to know my hopes and wishes before we arrive at Follitt Court. This is a matter to me of the utmost importance."

She paused as a knock was heard upon the door.

A servant entered to lay the table for dinner.

"I will retire to my own rooms across the hall to make some change in my toilet, Nerea," said the baroness. "My maid is waiting for me, and I shall return to you within fifteen minutes. And this evening, my dear, we will exchange a long chapter of confidences."

She pressed her lips to the brow of the impostor and withdrew, going to her own rooms.

"That ordeal is over," thought the false Miss Beryngham, with a thrill of delight. "I have hoodwinked my Lady Follitt! She accepts me as her niece without a shadow of suspicion! I am fixed in my new position! Now I can defy the whole world!"

#### CHAPTER X.

WELLESLEY TERRACE, Grand Street, Bayswater was a quiet and highly respectable neighbourhood, within eight minutes' walk of Kensington Gardens. The terrace consisted of a dozen detached houses, each having a small square grass-plot in front, and separated from each other from the street by tall brick walls.

These houses, three storeys in height, of bright red brick, with bay windows extending from foundation to roof, were for the most part occupied by professional men.

There was a doctor at one dwelling, an artist at another, two or three legal gentlemen in others, a half-pay army officer at another. Number twelve was occupied as a girls' school. Number four was Mrs. Punnet's very select lodging-house.

It was to this highly respectable neighbourhood then, and to Mrs. Punnet's select lodging-house, that the fugitive, Beatrix Rohan, had been directed by her eccentric travelling companion, Mrs. Trevor.

It was about nine o'clock in the evening when the cab containing Beatrix entered Grand Street and pursued its journey at a decreasing rate of speed. The evening was that upon which occurred the events narrated in the preceding chapter.

There was a fine, drizzling mist in the air; the gas-lamps emitted a pale and sickly glimmer; the April night seemed suddenly to have grown dross and cheerless.

Beatrix pressed her face against the glass and looked out with wistful, intent gaze.

The cabman slackened the pace of his horse to walk as he neared Wellesley Terrace, and the girl noticed the lighted, pleasant bay windows, across some of which light forms were flitting, and a strange homesick feeling swelled in her heart.

For a year before her imprisonment at the Chateau Valbock she had travelled with her relatives throughout Europe. Previous to that year of travel she had been the inmate for five years of a French school. She had never had a home since her infancy. A home seemed to her an earthly paradise.

The cab drew up before the gate of number four. The cabman alighted and pulled the garden bell. A boy in buttons answered the summons. Beatrix paid her fare, alighted, and hurried up the garden walk to the shelter of the doorway, and sounded the brass knocker nervously.

A neat-looking housemaid, wearing a spotless white cap, opened the door.

"Is Mrs. Punnet at home?" asked the young lady.

"Yes, miss," was the answer, the housemaid taking in the fact at a glance that the visitor was a lady, and looking beyond Beatrix for her escort. "If you will step up to the drawing-room, miss, I will call her."

The maid ushered her up a winding stair to the drawing-room, which was a pleasant apartment overlooking the street, and having its entire front occupied by the large bay-window. A fire was burning in the grate, and two gas-jets in the gasolier overhead were lighted.

Beatrix sat down in a large chair before the hearth. She had become comfortably warmed when the rustling of a woman's garments was heard, and the lodging-house keeper entered.

Beatrix arose, bowing courteously.

Mrs. Punnet was an elderly woman, dressed in black silk, portly of figure, with a large, round, good-natured face, in which were set a pair of very pale blue eyes, whose very glance was of keenest scrutiny.

She returned the girl's bow with an elaborate courtesy.

"I am the bearer of a letter to you, Mrs. Punnet, from Mrs. Trevor," said the fugitive heiress, producing the missive. "You will discover in the letter my errand."

Mrs. Punnet invited her to resume her seat, and Beatrix complied, while the former read the letter.

When she had finished it she said, pleasantly:

"Your application for a room is very well timed, Miss Trist. I have three rooms vacant, the family who occupied them having left me yesterday for a house of their own. I shall be pleased to show them to you. They were put in order to-day, and I expected to find tenants for them before the week's end. I have a single room upon the upper floor at the back at a guinea, and a suite of rooms directly above this at five guineas, which includes attendance. I am sorry that I have nothing between. The third floor front is let."

"Please show me your second floor, Mrs. Punnet. I think that will suit me."

The lodging-house keeper summoned a servant and ordered her to light the vacant rooms. Then she conducted Beatrix to the suite she had mentioned.

It was upon the second floor—that is, the floor above the drawing-room, and consisted of a parlour, bed-room, dressing-room, and bath-room.

The parlour was made charming by the big bay window. The floor was covered by a bright, new crimson carpet; there were crimson curtains at the window, crimson chairs and couches. The walls were covered with a crimson flock paper, picked out with

gold, and a few good engravings in gilt frames were hung upon them.

Altogether the room was pleasant, and cosy, and snug, and its look of warmth and brightness was very pleasing to Beatriz.

The bedroom was separated from the parlour by folding-doors, and was spotlessly clean. The carpet here was new also, the bedstead of polished brass, the linen white and lavender scented.

The dressing-room was quite small, and had windows opening upon a yard at the back. This last was furnished equally well with the other rooms of the suite, having long, crimson curtains, a couple of engravings on the wall, a long, swinging toilet-glass, and a long wall mirror.

"Of course the attendance will be of the best," said Mrs. Punnet, exhibiting the handsome and commodious wardrobe. "The housemaid gives especial care to these rooms, and is very prompt at answering the bell. Your meals will all be cooked for you, and served at any hour you may wish. I will myself do your marketing, and will present the bills as you may require."

"I will take the rooms, madam," said Beatriz. "I have dismissed the cab, and will enter into possession now, if you please. I have travelled from Brussels to-day, and should like a hot supper, if convenient. Send me up anything you may have."

Mrs. Punnet withdrew to execute the order, after touching a match to the neatly laid fire.

Beatriz laid aside her hat and cloak and travelling-bag, which was still attached to her belt. She brushed the dust from her garments and made a hasty toilet in her dressing-room.

When she returned to her parlour she found her table neatly laid and the housemaid in the act of depositing a steaming tray upon it.

"Supper is ready, miss," said the maid, removing the covers. "Is there anything more you will have?"

Beatriz smiled a negative. The supper seemed to her absolutely sumptuous. She was still half-famished. Her month's starvation upon bread and water at the Chateau Valbeck had made her very thin and weak, and her longing for food was something ravenous. Mrs. Punnet had sent her up a juicy beef-steak, stewed potatoes, toasted muffins and hot coffee, with an apology for having nothing better to offer. Beatriz dismissed the housemaid and ate her supper leisurely, her weakness beginning to give place to a growing strength and cheerfulness.

After her table had been cleared again, and Mrs. Punnet had been up again to inquire if Miss Trist wanted anything, exhibiting a respectful and kindly interest in her beautiful young lodger, Beatriz sat down again in the warm glow of her fire.

"This is a pleasant and safe refuge," she thought, with a warm glow of gratitude to the Providence that had so signally befriended her. "How Heaven has watched over and guided me! How difficult was my escape from the Chateau Valbeck. What perils I encountered then—and afterwards on that lonely road—and afterwards in the farmer's cart—and after that at the Antwerp fair—and again at the Hotel de Flandre at Brussels! Heaven has been good to me!"

Her soul swelled with grateful love. She thought of her past, of her future. The little clock upon the mantelpiece struck the hour of eleven and she aroused herself as from a trance.

She went into her snug little dressing-room and disrobed. After a bath she went to bed and slept until a late hour of the following morning.

She had locked the doors of her bed-room, which opened into her parlour upon retiring, but had left her parlour door unlooked.

After she had fully dressed herself she came out into her parlour. It had been cleaned and put into perfect order. A fire glowed redly in the grate. The breakfast-table was spread, and upon it lay the morning newspaper.

Beatriz greeted her housemaid with the gentle courtesy that always distinguished her manner, and sat down to the perusal of the morning news. Her breakfast was brought up almost immediately, and was well cooked and well served.

After the meal the young lady ordered a cab to be brought to her. It was nearly eleven o'clock and Beatriz was anxious to call upon the trustees of her property without farther delay.

"I must see them, if possible, before the Brands can see them," she said to herself. "In any case, I am sure they will protect me."

Her toilet was already made. She had no need of her water-proof cloak, the day being fine, and having put on her hat she descended to the cab, which was in waiting.

Her trustees were two in number. Both were men of the most uncompromising integrity, men who abhorred speculations, and who were even old-fashioned in their ideas, preferring Government Consols at three per cent. as an investment rather than

the stocks and shares which, paying high rates of interest, tempt so many of our modern business men.

Beatriz knew that her fortune was entrusted to her in such manner that her trustees, even were they inclined to prove unfaithful to their trust, could not alienate one penny of it from her. But she knew also that they were men of marked probity. Her wealth was safe in their hands. Would they not take equal care of the owner of that wealth?

She knew the addresses of these gentlemen. Mr. Dunlap, the elder, was married, and lived in Cavendish Square.

Mr. Hillsley, the younger, was a bachelor, and maintained an establishment in Upper Berkeley Street.

She resolved to go to Mr. Dunlap first, and gave the cabman an order to proceed to Cavendish Square.

Upon alighting at Mr. Dunlap's residence she saw that the house was closed, as if uninhabited. Her knock was answered by an old woman, evidently a housekeeper, who informed her that Mr. Dunlap was gone upon the Continent with his family, to be absent a year.

"Can you give me his address?" she asked.

"No, ma'am," was the reply. "He's in one place one day and another the next. He was in Greece when he last wrote, and was thinking of going farther east."

Beatriz inclined her head and descended the steps, her face shadowed.

"Upper Berkeley Street," she said, giving also the number.

The cab next stopped before a handsome mansion in the street designated. Beatriz ascended the spotless white stone steps and pulled the bell. She noticed that the shutters were drawn up at the windows, and that the house seemed occupied.

A liveried footman opened the door.

"Is Mr. Hillsley at home?" asked the visitor.

"He is not, ma'am," was the respectful answer.

"He is in the city usually at this hour."

Beatriz hesitated.

She did not like to go to Mr. Hillsley's office. She could not tell him her story in a place where he would be constantly liable to interruptions. She wanted to see him in the privacy of his own house, where, if necessary, she might plead to him for friendship and protection.

"When will he return home?" she asked.

"At six, ma'am. He drives in the park at four, but is always at home to dine at seven. He spends his evenings at home."

"Then I will call again this evening," said Beatriz.

"I will not leave my name," said the footman.

She descended the steps and drove away.

"A real lady," thought the footman. "I couldn't see her face, her veil was so thick, but she had the low, calm voice of a genuine lady. I suppose she's another applicant for that situation of governess in the family of Mr. Hillsley's sister down in Hertford. That makes three young ladies that have called to-day in answer to master's advertisement. They can't all of them get it, more's the pity."

Beatriz returned to Wellesley Terrace. The day dragged slowly enough to her.

At eight o'clock in the evening her cab arrived for her, and she proceeded again to Upper Berkeley Street.

The footman she had seen in the morning now gave her admittance.

"I mentioned to Mr. Hillsley that you had called in regard to the situation of governess, miss," he remarked, "and he will see you. He has sent away one young lady this evening as didn't suit. He is engaged just now. Just step in here and wait until he is at liberty!"

He conducted her down the long hall to a room near its farther end, into which he ushered her, then returned to his post.

The apartment in which Beatriz found herself was ill lighted. A door into the adjoining library was slightly ajar, and a long, ruddy gleam of light entered through the aperture.

The fugitive heiress took a seat among the shadows and waited.

She was all anxiety and impatience. She wished that she had sent in her name to Mr. Hillsley.

In the midst of her troubled thoughts the sound of voices reached her hearing.

Some one was talking in the library.

She recognized the voice as that of Mr. Hillsley, but she did not understand his words.

"You see, Mr. Hillsley," answered another voice, whose smoothness and gentleness were like the softness of the tiger, "the girl is my wife's niece, and as wilful a creature as ever lived. Heaven knows the trouble we have had with her. Still, she is Selma's niece, and we must find her, and endeavour to do our duty to her. You have not seen her, you say. Then she has not yet reached England.

Her first thought would be, I think, to come to England and to you with her wonderful stories."

Beatriz was as if chained to the spot.

In coming to Mr. Hillsley she had entered into the very presence of her enemy.

The voice which had last spoken was the voice of Colonel Brand!

(To be continued.)

## CLARICE.

"How could she have married him? That stern, cold—"

I was going to say something more, but stopped. I would not speak disrespectfully of him to his housekeeper, although I almost hated him because of the change, the terrible change, I found in the child of my dearest friend. In form, features, ay, in mind and heart I met the change. Sixteen years had passed since I saw her last, and then at fourteen Clarice was the loveliest, brightest, merriest, and truly the most bewitching little maid I ever saw—a beautiful singing bird, wild and free, although now only the shadow of herself. You could see she came from those of a sunny clime. Her mother was French, her father came from Spain. I was upon the sea when the little Clarice's mother went to Heaven. And when, four years after, I came home, they told me the child was fatherless too, and with her guardian.

And this man—now her husband—was the one her father left her to.

"How could she have married him?" again I asked, my thoughts going back to a frank and noble youth who loved her well I knew, and of the hope that filled my own heart for his success.

"Ah! that's what many before you have asked," said Margery Moore. "And now I wonder so myself. But then he was not quite so bad. No, I don't mean bad. I don't know how I came to say it, for never a cross word has he ever said to me, and I've lived with him full thirty years. I meant to say so—so still and strange. Then it did not seem so wonderful. She could have liked—yes, loved him. I'll tell you just how it was, as near as I can. Just thirteen years and a half ago my master, Mr. Hugh, called me into his room. He was sitting with an open letter in his hand.

"I saw directly something was wrong with him. His eyebrows were drawn close together, his lips as tight as could be.

"Margery," he said, 'an old friend, one that I loved, and one that has placed great confidence in me, is dead. His only child, a little girl, has left to my charge. Do you think you can take care of her? Can you attend to her wants until she is old enough to be sent to school?"

"Indeed I can, sir, and should love to have a child about the house," I said.

"Then he looked a little relieved, and said—

"Very well. Oh, I dread it. I suppose we shall have nothing but whining and crying for the next six months until she gets used to us. Margery, you must go and fetch her. Take lots of things that children like—a doll, toys and sugar-plums—to stop her crying and win her over. And I say, Margery, the day before I expect you home I shall go off—only for two or three weeks—travel a little until the child gets used to the place. I could not stand her fussing about, crying for her mother and father. I don't know but she may need a nurse. Well, you will know. Go as soon as you can, and don't let us talk any more about the child."

The next morning he put a purse, well filled, in my hands. And two days after I started to fetch the child.

"Well, you know what a surprise it was to me when I found her. Why she could not have loved one who seemed so worthy I can't tell."

"Ah, Margery, who can tell the why of a woman's heart?" I answered, my own full of regrets and sorrow.

"Yes, yes, you are right," said Margery. "I fear she has pined for a brighter home than ours. Mr. Hugh was absent, as he had said he would be, when I got back again.

"How well I remember the look of surprise and disappointment on the child's face when I carried her to see the portrait of her guardian hanging in the great hall.

"Does he never laugh?" she asked.

"I shook my head.

"Nor smile?" she continued, her great eyes growing larger.

"Rarely," I answered; and then, lest she should grow frightened with thoughts of so stern a man, I said: "Mr. Hugh is a great student. The lives and fortunes of many depend on his thought and word. It is not meet that a magistrate should be a merry man."



"This seemed to satisfy her a bit, and with a knowing little look and a graver air she said:

"That is true. But some time, long ago, when papa loved him and he was not a magistrate, was he not different then?"

"Oh, yes, then he was as other young men. But now he is five-and-thirty, you know," I answered; and could have told of one as young and beautiful as she having won his heart, and then cast it aside to be worse than broken—hardened and filled with doubts and trusting none; for that it was that made him so.

"Then if once like other men he shall be again. I'll coax back his smiles and make him love me too. For I shall love him because papa bade me to."

"A letter from 'our master,' as Clarice laughingly called her guardian, told when he would be home.

"If the child has not got pacified yet keep her out of my way for mercy's sake!" he wrote, and how merrily she laughed about it.

"I almost dreaded his coming. Such a change she had wrought in the great, dark, gloomy rooms!

"She ransacked the store-room and closets, trunks and boxes; found bright coverings for the old faded sofas and chairs; brightened up the pictures, and brought out 'our master's' picture, hung it over the mantel of his room, and decked it with evergreens; brought forth numberless little vases of flowers of her own work, and pretty things of china and marble, and put them all in his room; and then, to my horror, laid her hands on his books and papers. It was no use all I could say. She would do as she would.

"Now he will know where to find just what he wants without tumbling over everything for one. Oh! they are all right, Margery. I always arranged papa's, and he was a lawyer!" she said, when she saw how frightened I looked.

"Then all the old silver was made to look like new. And last of all she coaxed me into a lot of unnecessary trouble in the way of nice things for supper that night."

"She was hid behind the door of the room she had made so beautiful when he entered. And I stood trembling in a far corner. Round and round he turned. Then he passed his hand across his brow like one half awake.

"Where am I, Margery?" he called.

"I was trembling so that I could not answer. In an instant, from behind the door, quickly came Clarice; and went right up to 'our master's' side, saying:

"Won't I do? Margery is out somewhere."

"I had darted into the passage, but near enough to see and hear.

"How beautiful she was! Her dark eyes danced with delight. Her cheeks were brighter than any roses I ever saw. Her hand was on his arm, and again she spoke to him.

"Let me take your coat and hat."

"And in another instant she had pulled off his fur gloves, and began rubbing his hands, and saying:

"Oh, how cold your hands are! Margy, Margy! come help to get 'our master' warm."

"Who are you?" he managed to say, at length.

"Then such a merry, ringing laugh sounded through the great room, and she said:

"Your child, Clarice Gordon! And a very good child she will be and not cry a bit if you will only love her a little. See, I am pacified!"

"There was such a merry twinkle in her eye, and remembering his words, he had to smile, and asked, in a voice more like that of years gone by:

"How old are you, Clarice?"

"Seventeen, almost. Come, say, are you pleased or cross?" Margery said you would be just so. She put up and crossed her little fingers, again repeating her inquiry.

"I am pleased that you are happy," he said.

"And I knew then she had won her way.

"Yes, he was pleased. He liked being made so much of, liked having the beautiful girl flitting about and 'taking care of him,' as she called her pretty ways.

"She threw wide open all the doors and windows, and let the sunshine into the house and into the master's heart too.

"She coaxed him to take her about among his friends. She had young folks often at the Grange; and soon, of course, lovers enough. But she laughed at them all, declaring that she was going to stay with her guardian all the days of her life. Well, whether he really loved her, or whether he feared some one might win her away, I can't tell. I only know he came to me and told me Clarice was to be his wife, and she, hugging me nearly breathless, said:

"Dear old Margy, you see now I've made our master love me. Now is he not like he used to be, a little?"

"They were married and went away. And I had things as I knew would please her when they came back.

"Things for a while went on well enough. Sometimes he would get in his old way; but she would win him from it. But after a bit these spells came closer together, and always when she went from home; then she seldom left him. But folks all about liked her, and would come to see her—old and young. After a little—I knew just how it was—he was jealous of everybody, and wanted to cage the beautiful bird, to keep her to himself alone. She tried hard enough to please him. Only, she could not be other than charming to all who came; and all kept on coming.

"He grew worse and worse back to his old ways. He never chided, only by looks, so cold and stern. When the baby came I thought things would grow bright again. Her heart was full of hope, I know. She was very ill. Pale faces and anxious hearts were in the house that day. But she lived. What for? I've often thought, Heaven forgive me. I've heard her say, with her baby pressed close to her bosom:

"Oh, little one, why could not you and I have gone to heaven?"

"For a little after the baby came he was kinder, and would sit in the nursery, and seemed quite happy again. But when the mother grew well and could go about again the old mood grew on him. The baby was her comfort. And so things went on until the little Pearl was three years old."

"Did he love the baby?" I asked.

"Oh, yes, he loved her; that I know. And she was wonderfully fond of him. She was such a sweet, winning child! And sometimes with her sweet ways, she would draw the two together. Baby though she was, she seemed to know something was wrong. The day before she was taken ill he came to with her in his arms. Clarice came up, and, putting out her hands, said:

"Come to mamma."

"The babe started up, and was about to spring to her mother's arms when something in his face made her turn and look doubtful.

"Stay with me, he whispered. 'Come to mamma,' pleaded she.

"From one to the other the sweet eyes turned, and then, with one arm still round her father, she leant forward, clasping the other about her mother, and whispered:

"Pearl loves both—wants to stay with both."

"With all her little strength she drew them together. Had she lived she would have held them so, I truly believe. Well, you have heard that, after a few hours' illness, our darling went to Heaven. Oh, then came this fearful change! If he had not alone nursed his sorrow, but shared with her, I think she could have borne it better. With never a caress, never a word of love or sympathy, the months and years have passed; and now, at last, the end has come. You have come to take her from us, back to her own sunny home. I shall never see her more, I know. If she leaves it will be for ever."

"Margery," I said, "do you not see she is dying here—starving? I must take her to those who will feed her with the best of all food—sympathy and love. We will bring back life and hope."

"Her physician had advised travel; change of scene. She insisted she was not ill, and seemed careless of everything.

"Not even the thought of revisiting the home and friends of her childhood aroused any interest, and he neither opposed nor sanctioned the doctor's advice.

"Things were in this state when I found Clarice. At length she agreed to go with me.

"Shall I go?" she forced herself from the barrier of ice to ask.

"As you please," he answered, in a voice that made me shiver.

"Ah, he knew well enough when she left it would be for ever! She could have won him again, I am sure.

"Could the wounded heart have ceased its smarting? I knew what it was. I could solve the mystery. Disappointed that her power had so soon failed—mortified that she had tried to win a love so short-lived, and wounded to the very quick by his cold indifference, she had drawn herself behind a wall of ice. For nearly eight years she had lived thus. And he had been disappointed. He had expected the merry child to continue her loving wiles—on and on, never growing less, although he threw not a ray of sunshine on her path. Caged, yet he expected her to sing as when free and taught by love.

"She was ready to start. Like an automaton, she had moved about making the necessary preparations. Everything that told of little Pearl was collected and packed. Only one—her picture, that hung in his room. Could she leave that? No; she must, she

would take it. She believed him away, purposely, to avoid a parting.

"Creeping, fearful of even a remonstrance from Margery, she entered the room. All was quiet. Stepping on a chair, she lifted the pictured angel child, and, clasping it tightly to her bosom, was turning to leave the room when a hand was laid, not heavily, only firmly, on her shoulder.

"You must not take that, Clarice," her husband said.

"I must—I shall! She was mine. I cannot leave this," she cried.

"I have nothing else. Give me it!"

"He took hold of the picture; she, clinging tightly, cried:

"No, no, to me; give her to me!"

"Hush! A sweet, stay voice was heard. Clarice's eyes were lifted—her ear strained to catch the sound. Her husband's face had lost its sternness. His bosom rose and fell convulsively.

"Pearl loves both; wants to stay with both," fell clearly, distinctly on the ear of each.

The mother's hold was loosened and, sobbing, she sank to the floor.

"Had the angel-child's spirit hovered above them? Was her mission to unite again the sundered hearts? Or was it only the well-remembered cry of the baby girl that filled the ear and entered the heart of both at that moment? Who knows?

"Stepping, he gently raised her, bent his head, and said, in a soft, low tone:

"Let her be with both, Clarice, and if our darling's spirit hovers near let her find us not apart."

"It was little Pearl's father that spoke then."

"Wee again—wee for ever—that to love! back to Heaven!"

"We went away together, she, I, and the baby's father. Respectfully Clarice's health and spirits returned. 'The effects of the warmer climate,' her friends said, 'I know what those, and thanks to Heaven, feeling sure that when again in her own home no chilling blasts would hurt her. There was warmth in the heart that was bound to shield her. She had only the babe in Heaven.'

"Thus! Heaven for giving me little Pearl! Better to have had her taken than never given," she said—"I can never to have known my baby's blessed influence." A. H. B.

THE CASE OF BIRMINGHAM OF THE CASE OF THE PRINCE

AND PRINCE OF WALES WAS 1,366, 126, 64.

AN OLD TURKISH CONTRACT—At a sale of arms recently at the public auction, a Turkish soldier of the 18th century was knocked down to Baron Rothschild for 2,000*l.* It was originally bought for 10*l.* in the 18th century.

MILK Cakes.—At New York a factory has been established to convert milk into cakes. To the milk is added one-fourth of sugar, and a tablespoonful of carbonate of soda dissolved. It is then exposed to the fire. At the end of three hours the mixture becomes pasty, and it is then mixed or beaten until the mass is reduced to an orange-yellow powder. It is then suffered to cool, and formed into tablets by pressure.

THE CIVIL CONTINGENCIES FUND.—The House of Commons votes annually a sum of money which is known as the Civil Contingencies Fund. This fund is available for the payment of those charges which spring up unexpectedly, and some very curious items are invariably found in the list. Here are some specimens:—Repairing the Speaker's plate, 3*l.*; burying the carcasses of porpoises washed ashore, near Londonderry, 1*l.* 18*s.*; Duke of Connaught's visit to Norway to be present at the Coronation of the King, 258*l.* 4*s.* 4*d.*; Installation of the Shah as Knight Companion of the Garter, 43*l.* 3*s.* 4*d.*, and gratuity to Hon. Henry J. B. Wood, 11th Hussars, for bringing the despatches relating to the fall of Coomassie, 500*l.*

DEATH OF SIR CHARLES LYELL, BART.—Sir Charles Lyell, the eminent geologist, died recently, at his residence in Harley Street, at the age of seventy-eight. His great scientific attainments were recognized by two Prime Ministers, he having been created a Knight in 1848, at the recommendation of Lord Russell, and a Baronet in 1864 by Lord Palmerston. Sir Charles, who was the author of several important geological works, and of many papers in scientific journals, has written "The Principles of Geology," first published in 1830, the tenth edition in 1865; and "Elements of Geology," in 1838, now in the seventh edition; "Travels in North America," a narrative of a visit which he paid to North America for the purpose of examining the geological structure of that continent, appeared in 1841; "Second Visit to the United States," and a treatise on "The Geological Evidence of the Antiquity of Man; with Remarks on Theories of the Origin of Species by Variation," in 1863. Sir Charles leaves no successor to his title.



[THE WELCOME HOME.]

## HARRY'S WIFE.

HARRY WILLARD was going to be married, and his friends were unwilling. In fact, his mother, who was very energetic, declared, "if she was in father's place" (meaning her husband) "she would forbid the bands."

Mrs. Willard's "father" was not a gifted man. Mrs. Willard had not married him for his intellectual wealth, and he had somewhat misty views upon most subjects. And he evidently regarded these "bands" that his wife spoke of as two long lines attached to the matrimonial halter, in which Harry and his wife were to be driven in future in wedded harness.

He replied, that "it wouldn't do no good to meddle with the bands, for they were determined to be joined together, and if they wasn't then they would be at some future time."

So the bands were not forbidden, and Harry Willard and Nelly Parker were united till death parted them. As Harry whispered to Nelly, as they passed out of the church:

"Till death, darling; my own, and for ever after. Such love as ours is for all time."

Nelly's blue eyes were swimming in tears as she raised them to her lover-husband's face, and I think he translated aright the grieved, wistful look that shadowed their sweet love-light; for he whispered again:

"Remember what the Bible says, my darling, a man shall forsake father and mother for his wife; and that you are now my own wife, to love and to protect for evermore."

Harry's handsome face looked so very noble and manly as he said this that little Nelly forgot the great sorrow of her life in her perfect love and admiration of her husband.

And she was not so much to blame for her admiration, for Harry Willard was a very noble young fellow.

He was rich, but it didn't hurt him, for, having won the love of sweet Nelly Parker, he did not choose to desert her and break her heart and his own because his parents objected to her poverty.

No other fault could be brought against her. She was an orphan, entirely friendless, save for Harry. For the invalid widowed mother, whom Nelly had supported with her needle, had died two months before her marriage—died with a look of perfect content upon her worn features as Harry took Nelly's hand in his and vowed "to love and protect his sweet wife always."

All this occurred in the village of Clayton, where Harry had to spend the winter with an uncle. And when his parents, especially his mother, raised their stormy opposition, Harry, as we see, was not inclined to break his vow to the dead and the living to appease his parents' prejudice.

At the stormy interview that occurred when Harry told his mother his firm determination to marry Nelly his mother told him "that not one penny of their property should he ever have; it should all go to found an hospital or church."

"Very well," said Harry, "I had rather have Nelly than a hundred fortunes."

"Such a shame!" said his mother. "And then you might have had Esther Price."

"Cousin Esther! That old cat!" cried Harry, irreverently.

"She is only our third cousin, and is worth fifty thousand; and it ought to be kept in the family."

"She is fifty years old."

"She isn't a day over thirty-five, and you can't have everything in a wife."

"I have everything in Nelly—everything that is sweet and lovable, bless her!"

Which words, spoken so lover-like and enthusiastically, so incensed the old lady that she left the room so rapidly that every ribbon on her cap floated backward like flags in a high gale.

But the old lady had a heart; such open-mouthed, impulsive people usually have. And when she saw

Harry, her only boy and the idol of her heart, dressed in his best, ready to go to his bridal, she retired into the cheese-room, the farthest in the house, and sat down upon the old cheese-press, unused for years, and moistened it with her tears, out of sight of all, as she thought.

But Harry had a heart too, a very warm heart, one that was large enough to hold the sweet young girl-bride and the faithful old mother. And he followed her for a last kiss.

He bent over her and kissed the faded cheek very tenderly; and then, noting her tears and softened mood, he ventured to say:

"Mother, if you would only see Nelly you would be sure to love her. She would be such a daughter to you."

"Love her? Never!" And the old lady's indignant emotions dried her tears. "I never will call her daughter, and she shall never enter my house."

"Never, mother!" added Harry, sternly. "Never till you feel differently toward her, till you look upon her as your daughter, welcome her as one; then she will come."

"She shall never come. She has stolen my boy's heart, ruined his prospects in life; for Esther stood ready to marry you, I know, and put her property with ours, and you would be the richest man in the county. I had set my heart on it. And now this girl, a fortune-hunter, no doubt, has stepped between you and prosperity and happiness. I never will call her daughter, or step my foot into her house."

"Very well, mother. But if you ever change your mind, if you ever come to her, if you or father want a daughter's care and affection, she will be ready."

"She shall never lift her finger for father or me—never! And you will never see either of us inside of your house—never."

So Harry Willard and his young bride set out on their married life over a somewhat tempestuous sea. But for all that they were very happy. Harry was clerk in a bank, with a good salary, and Nelly made their little cottage-home the very coziest and brightest spot upon earth. It was a pleasant sight to see her fitting round the supper table like a household fairy, in blue muslin and dainty white apron, with marvellous lace ruffles upon it, intent upon seeing whether Hannah, their one servant, had arranged everything to suit Harry's rather fastidious taste.

And then, when the delicately tinted china, and crystal, and dainty viands of her own cooking were arranged to suit her, to see her run out to the front portico and stand with her pretty blue eyes shaded with her hand to see if Harry was coming; for Harry's road lay directly toward the setting sun, and its splendour dazzled her as she looked out for her king.

And then, when the handsome, manly form appeared, stepping lightly—as who would not, to be welcomed to such a home?—then to see her fit down the lilac and rose-bordered walk to the pretty rustic gate for her lover-husband's kiss, why, it was all as good as a picture.

And so two years rolled away, and then came an evening, it was a most lovely and cloudless June evening, and Harry, coming home at nightfall, stepped, I think, if possible, more lightly than ever. For, though Nelly did not run down to the gate to meet him, he saw her looking out of the vine-garlanded window eagerly, and welcoming as ever, and, held up in her arms, its golden head a shining, and its blue shoulder-knots fluttering, was the sweetest of baby faces, a miniature Nelly in beauty.

And, well, for amiability and cleverness, it far transcended every other child that had as yet appeared upon this planet. Other babies had their good points, doubtless, but this child was altogether perfect.

Its name was Susie; for tender-hearted Nelly had realized, by the mysterious knowledge of motherhood, more than ever what it would be to have such a son as Harry, and lose him from any cause, so, as a sort of silent peace-offering for having stolen her boy, she would insist upon calling the baby after his grandmother.

Blessed was this cottage above others after this little angel visitant came to tarry with them.

But one shadow dimmed the blue sky of their content, and this was a constant sorrow to both Harry and Nelly, although they did not often speak of it, yet it was in both their hearts—the alienation of his father and mother. Never had Nelly met either of them. Harry visited them occasionally. Nelly would make him go. He, resenting their treatment of her, would not have gone nearly so often had it not been for her persuasive eloquence.

"They are old, Harry, and have no one but you."

"But they have no need to be so unjust to you, my pet."

"If they are unjust, we must not be cruel; two wrongs never make a right yet," pleaded tender-hearted Nelly.

And after baby came she had another, a stronger argument.



"What if our precious child should grow up and become estranged from us? Harry, you must go and see your father and mother to-morrow."

This was said upon that June night when Harry saw the little face held up to the window to welcome him.

Harry could not possibly have refused any request that that most perfect baby's mamma could ask him; but to his regret he was obliged to tell her that he was to be sent to London on business for the bank; he must start in the morning, and should be gone two days.

Nelly was too sensible a little woman to make any objections to her husband's leaving her on business, although it was the first time he had left her so long since their marriage. And Nelly was not strong now; the little face on her bosom had stolen a good deal of pink bloom.

She made no objections to her husband's going; but she told him she should miss him very much, and should count the hours till he returned; and then she asked the wonderful baby "if she shouldn't, and if she didn't think two whole days a terribly long time for papa to be gone?"

And the wonderful child, feeling, doubtless, an opportune twinge of colic, drew up its baby brows in a melancholy frown, and looked pathetically uncomfortable.

And Nelly said, triumphantly:

"It knew, so it did, that its own papa was going away for two whole days!"

Harry set out early the next morning, leaving two soft cheeks wet with tears where his kisses had been, Nelly's and Baby Susie's.

Let it not be understood that a three-months old baby shed tears over its father's departure. No, Nelly's tears were on her own cheeks, and the baby cheeks pressed so closely to them were wet with them.

Nelly said to herself "she was foolish; but, as she said, she was not strong, and two days seemed a long time for her husband to be away from her."

Upon this very same fair June morning Harry's father and mother—and she had been awake nearly all the previous night, counting the perils and anxieties of the journey—set out for Clayton. The old gentleman had an idea of getting a little property which had been long in litigation, but which now seemed to be in a fair way of speedy settlement, in consequence of the energetic action of the keen lawyer he had engaged to conduct the case after others had been tried without satisfactory result.

Now this lawyer happened to reside in Clayton, and Harry's father wished to consult him personally, and accordingly set out to do so.

Old Mrs. Willard did not often leave home, and she worried and harassed her husband with fearful prophecies and forebodings. Three times during the first few miles did she make the old gentleman, who was very lame, dismount from the high seat and examine the harness. Then she heard the linch-pin break and the axle-tree crack; and then the springs broke down, one by one in her vivid imagination. And at last, when half-way down a steep hill, the old lady declared "the bottom was breaking down," and told him to get out quick and see.

The old gentleman rose in his dignity, and declared "that he wouldn't get out again till they got to Clayton, to suit any body."

Poor old gentleman, how little did he know what fate had in store for him, although perhaps he was not far wrong, he did not get out "to suit any body."

The village of Clayton lies in a most sheltered little valley, with high hills standing like sentinels, in fadeless green livery about it, and it was in descending one of these hills, about a quarter of a mile from the village, that Mrs. Willard exclaimed again:

"Father, do be careful! I declare if you haven't run over every stone between here and home, and gone down every rut. Why can't you be careful? And I do believe one of the axle-trees is broken."

"No, it hasn't," said her husband, calmly. "They are all right; you are always imagining things."

"Well, do just get out and look," said his wife, lifting her black lace veil and peering down the side of the carriage. "You know Jim never can bear anything near his heels. We shall be killed just as sure as the world."

"No, we shan't, mother. I never have killed you yet, and you have been expectin' it for fifty years."

"Well, there's no need of a man being so careless."

"I'm not careless; you are fanciful, mother; women always are."

"When we are both thrown out and killed perhaps you won't twit me with being fanciful."

"Perhaps not," says the old gentleman, calmly. But patience hath its limits, and when the old lady rose and put her lace veil from her face and peered down at the harness, the old gentleman,

worn out by her complaints, and probably feeling that his dignity as a driver was being impeached, said to her, in a reproachful tone:

"If it hadn't been for you, mother, we should have our boy to be driving for us."

Within the memory of the old gentleman never could such a speech have been made to his wife without drawing out as sharp an answer. But now she said nothing. Memory was busy with the old lady; memories of the time when she and her husband, then a handsome young man, would ride out with a bright little face between them, and small hands would proudly hold the end of the reins, thinking they were driving. Then, afterward, when they were older, she and father, sitting on the back seat together, while the handsome, bright-eyed boy, whom they both worshipped, sat before them, guiding the spirited horses, to their great admiration.

But Harry, their own boy, their idol, was separated from them now, and the old times could never come back again. Her boy, her Harry! Somehow of late the old lady's heart had ached for her boy more than ever. She hungered for the sight of his handsome, manly face—his straightforward, honest brown eyes, his bright, sympathetic smile, his cheery, loving voice, his ringing laugh.

Ah, how bright and cheerful he had made the old homestead, which was dismal enough now. And what a child he had been to them till this one fault—and was it a fault? Of late Mrs. Willard often found herself asking this question to her own soul. Everywhere she heard only good of her son's wife: everything she heard of her showed the wisdom of his choice.

An aunt, one of the maiden angels who tread fearlessly amidst the fire of domestic dissensions with no smell of fire on their garments, visited both Sister Susan and Nephew Harry; and the keenest cross-questioning of Sister Susan could extract nothing but good accounts of Harry's wife. Her sweet disposition, her dainty housekeeping, her economy, her industry, her warm, loving nature, why, Aunt Rebecca grew eloquent over them.

And Baby Susie was named after her. Why, Aunt Rebecca would descend upon the perfections of the baby till Sister Susie felt as if she must needs set out that very minute and take the baby, her own Harry's baby, to her heart, if it were not for her pride. But her pride made a gulf between them that she could never cross; that was all that parted them. For Harry's mother had had relatings of heart before Cousin Esther had come to make her home with them. But now, she had been there six months, and every day she would say to herself, with groanings of spirit over her past blindness, "What if I had had my way, and had made Harry marry her, what a life would he have had?" She felt in her heart that no amount of wealth could compensate for the sharp thorns of her daily presence.

Cousin Esther was a very disagreeable person; and age, which mellows noble natures, like rare wine, also has power to sharpen vinegar. Cousin Esther was not a pleasant presence in any man's or woman's home. And as the days rolled by more and more did Harry's mother long for her boy, long to be fully reconciled with him, to see the old sunshine on his face when he looked at her. She felt that she could love his wife now for his sake, and for her own. After Cousin Esther's companionship for months she realized how pleasant it would be to have so gentle and sweet a daughter as every one pictured Harry's wife to be.

But the old lady's pride stood in the way. How could she bend her pride sufficiently to own she had been in the wrong? And she had said that she would never enter into her son's wife's home, never call her daughter. And Harry had said she should never come to them till she did. No, it must go on always as it was now; for wider than sea or land the old lady's pride separated them. And the old days could never come back again.

The old lady was so wrapt in her musings that she forgot for a moment the perils of the journey, the imperilled carriage and harness, and Jim's heels. But a tremendous bound of the vehicle aroused her, and she exclaimed, somewhat sarcastically:

"There, you couldn't miss gettin' on top of that one, could you? I know I heard something crack then. Father, do get out and see."

"I won't get out."

Mistaken old gentleman, he did get out. The old lady was right this time. The axle-trees did break, and Jim, incensed by having some strange object touch his sacred heels, wheeled round, ran the carriage into a ditch, and the old lady landed on a soft spot of grass, but the old gentleman, less fortunate, found himself upon a stone-heap, with a wheel partly across his arm.

It was near a pretty white cottage where the accident occurred, and a delicate-looking lady, with a baby on her bosom, was looking out of a window and saw it all. She despatched her servant

quickly to the spot, and a man who was working in her garden dropped his spade and ran after her.

The old gentleman was senseless, and looked like a dead man; and he was taken up, and carried into the white cottage, with the grief-stricken old lady following him, shedding silent tears under the lace veil.

Nelly, tender-hearted little Nelly, who had been known to cry over a lame dog, did not, you may be sure, see a white-haired old gentleman brought into her house unconscious, and a gray-headed old lady following him weeping, without her own warm heart melting.

She met the weeping old lady with tears in her own soft blue eyes. She comforted her and patted her as if she had been her own mother; she opened her best bedroom for the unconscious old gentleman; and then, when the doctor came, she stood by him bravely till he set the broken arm.

The old gentleman soon recovered his senses. He was stunned by the fall, or, as he always told it afterwards, in relating the adventure to his friends, he would never fail to say:

"I was stunned by the fall. They all thought I was dead; but I was only stunned."

Nelly was not strong, as we said, although the excitement had given her for the time an unnatural strength. And when the old lady, relieved of her first terrible dread, began to look about her, admiring the bright, cosy home, and the sweet little mistress, she caught sight of a photograph hanging upon the wall, and she exclaimed, with eyes full of wonder:

"How came my son Harry's picture here?"

"Your son!"

Then it was that Nelly, worn out with her love and her unusual toil, and the sudden shock, fell down in a fainting fit at the feet of her astonished mother-in-law. It was the first time in her happy life, and when she recovered, she found her head on the old lady's bosom, and Harry's mother bent down and kissed her, and said:

"My daughter!"

And so the long silence and the long estrangement were bridged over, and made as if they had never been, by that motherly kiss and Nelly's warm arms about her now fond mother's neck.

Nelly was very ill all that night; but she wouldn't have her husband sent for. She said she was only weak, she should be better in the morning. And so she was very weak yet, not able to rise from the sofa much; but, oh! so sweet and gentle and loving, so fearful that Harry's mother would tire out. But the old lady scorned the idea of weariness, she refused all rest. She stood over Nelly all night, and tended her with as gentle a care as she ever gave to her Baby Harry.

And Baby Susie, in all her short, petted life, surely she had never known such closely watchful and admiring attention as she received during that night and all the next day.

And Mamma Nelly felt her strength renewed and her faith strengthened in what she had always believed, that there was never such a child before! And grandma discovered new charms and excellences in the wonderful child every hour. And the next day after the accident, about night-fall, as grandpa lay comfortably in his bedroom, and Mamma Nelly lay on the sofa, smiling in her content at the picture before her, of grandma holding Baby Susie in her arms, the little one uttered some grave remarks in the wonderful dialect of infancy. Grandma looked up admiringly and said:

"I thought my Harry was the sweetest child I ever saw; but this child beats everything. I wouldn't have believed it if I hadn't seen it with my own eyes."

And then the old lady spoke every word slowly and emphatically, as its great import demanded.

"This child, daughter, has an idea of talking. It is calling its father."

And then how mamma admired grandma's appreciation of the wonderful babe! Why, even dear Harry had laughed a little when she had declared her firm belief that no other child ever approached it in intellect. He had thought "that three months was too immature an age for the intellect to expand to any great marked degree." But grandma was older and had had experience, of course she knew. And how they sympathized over its astounding merits, and how the little tender fingers of the wonderful baby drew their hearts together.

Of course, after thus "being called" by his first-born, no father, unless his heart was stone, could delay his coming. Harry's heart was not stone; it was composed of far softer materials, and it was not long after that Harry, coming in quickly to surprise Nelly, saw a picture that almost turned his brown looks hoary gray on the spot.

"Mother! You here?"

"Yes," said the old lady, as calmly as if it were an everyday occurrence. "Your father broke the axle-trees, and almost broke his neck, and your wife here has almost killed herself taking care of him." And she added, as Harry bent down to kiss the

sweet face on the crimson cushions. "Do you know, my son, that I think it was very thoughtless and imprudent in you to go off and leave her two days, as weak as she is?"

Harry, happy Harry, was delighted to be blamed in this way; and he made proper apologies, pleading business, etc.

From that time the old lady never once referred to the estrangement. But, as she was energetic in her dislikes, so was she in her friendships. Her daughter-in-law, and especially the wonderful baby, Esther said, "she made perfect fools of." But as Esther left soon after to see if there was any warmth in a fourth cousin's heart, or if it were indeed a frozen fountain of ice, as was her third cousin Susan's, of course her criticisms did not long annoy the old lady. And Baby Essey pulled off her grandmother's gold spectacles, and picked her choicest roses in peace, and made delightful havoc with her knitting-work; and every act was good in the eyes of the doting grandmother.

So Nelly's sweet presence and "baby fingers" waken touches" renew the youth of the couple at the old homestead where Harry played in infancy.

Truly we know not always what we most wish may be for our best good, no more than did the children of Israel, who rashly desired a king. For Mrs. Willard, enjoying the prosperity and happiness of Harry and his gentle wife, returns thanks every day that she did not have the power to do what she so much desired to do at one time, "forbid the throne." M. H.

#### QUEEN'S QUEENS.

THERE are at the present time no less than four Queens of Spain, and if the rumours of King Alfonso's approaching marriage are based upon fact there will be the fifth. The four ladies who have succeeded to the precarious dignity of Queen of Spain are:

Queen Christina, born April 26th, 1806, married Ferdinand VII., December 11th, 1829; widow, September 29th, 1833.

Queen Isabella II., daughter of Ferdinand VII. and Princess Christina of the Two Sicilies, born October 10th, 1830; succeeded to the throne on the death of her father; deposed September 29th, 1868.

Queen Marguerite, wife of Amadeus I., Duke of Aosta, who accepted the Spanish crown October 1870, and abdicated February 11th, 1873.

Queen Maria, married February 6th, 1847, to his "Most Sacred Majesty," Charles VII. (Don Carlos).

**DOG LICENCES.**—The number of dog licences issued during the year for the whole of Great Britain was 1,176,262, being about 40,000 in excess of the preceding year. This latter may be accounted for by the increase of dogs.

**AT Cassiobury Mills, Watford, a handsome round frame, used for making fancy articles in needlework, has just been made for Her Majesty the Queen. It is of mahogany, inlaid with boxwood, and beautifully polished. The pegs are of ebony. A similar oval wood frame has also been made for another member of the Royal Family.**

**LONDON NEWSPAPER ENTERPRISE.**—The Great Northern Railway Company, on the 1st of March, despatched an early morning newspaper train from King's-cross. It left King's-cross at 5.15 a.m., and arrived at Peterboro' at 7, Nottingham 8.40, Doncaster 9.3, Wakefield, 9.57, Leeds 10, Bradford 10.15, Halifax, 10.36, York 10, Sheffield 9.20, Stockport 10.47, Guide Bridge, 10.53, Huddersfield 11.45, and at Manchester at 10.45.

**A VALUABLE RECEIPT.**—A great Parisian medical authority gives the following receipt to keep in good health and to ruin the doctors, and the papers with the desire of aiding him in that romantic scheme afford it full publicity. The doctor says:—Drink little wine, eat not at night, walk after each meal, sleep not after dinner; good temper, rest, and sobriety are worth all the medicines in the world; sleep in pure air, often wash your hands; this conduces to health.

**THE EMBANKMENT.**—After long disputes between the Corporation and the Board of Works it is agreed that three of the streets leading south from Fleet Street shall be continued on the Embankment, while one more opening is to be made from the Strand. On the Embankment itself it is proposed by different parties to build a church, an aquarium, and a theatre, each of which will in its way improve the appearance of the roadway, also some handsome shops with residential chambers above them, and a first-class restaurant and café.

**A USEFUL DOG.**—Not far from St. Andrew's Hall, Norwich, there is a hairdresser's shop, where machinery is used for the purpose of brushing the hair. A customer entering the shop will doubtless see a large dog reclining lazily upon the mat, little dreaming that this half-drowsy animal will perform

an important part in the tonsorial operation. The proprietor cuts your hair, and as soon as it is done strikes a small bell; the dog starts up and darts upstairs, immediately the brush revolves and the process is performed admirably, thanks to the dog, which having entered a large wheel (in an upper room) something like an enlarged squirrel's cage, by turning it causes the brush, etc., to revolve.

#### PACETIE.

THE old maxim that "man proposes" is flatly contradicted by splinters, who only wish he did.

**CHANGE OF TITLE.**—One of the Canadian oil wells appears to have been called "The Moonlight." A far more appropriate name would have been "The Moonshine."—Punch.

#### POLITICS MADE EASY.

What is a Conservative?—One who wishes to keep what he has and allow others to do the same.

What is a Liberal then?—One who wishes to keep what he has, but wants to be very liberal indeed with what belongs to somebody else.—Judy.

**SUPEREROGATORY.**—The sun is all very well, said an Irishman at a recent philosophical conversation, "but the moon is worth two of it; for the moon affords us light in the night-time, when we want it, whereas the sun's with us in the daytime, when we have no occasion for it."

#### CHIPS FROM THE QUEEN'S BENCH.

Oils well that ends well.

Make Hay while the sun shines.

It never rains but it pours in Torrens.

It's a queer well that has a Long bottom.

#### THE OLD, OLD STORY.

Gent (to Cupid): "Well, my little fellow, what are you doing out in the street this cold evening?"

Cupid: "I have just left that big house there. The sheriff's officer came in at the door, and I left at the window."

Gent: "Ah, I see; it was a marriage for money."

"The Young Lord."—"My son," said a doting father, who was about taking his son into business, "what shall be the style of the new firm?" "Well, governor," said the one-and-twenty youth, looking up into the heavens for an answer, "I don't know—but suppose we have it John H. Samphlin and Father." The old gentleman was struck by the originality of the idea, but could not adopt it.

#### SOMETHING LIKE A SCHEMATIC.

Jones: "There's always something new. The valentine makers are actually following Darwin now!"

Brown: "Nonsense!"

Jones: "It's true. Out of half a dozen valentines I got yesterday, no less than five had some reference to the theory of man's descent from monkeys. Blowed if I believe it though."—Pun.

#### MORE ECONOMY.

Indulgent Husband (to dear little wife, who has bought some new curls): "But, my darling, you will never be able to wear them—they are flaming red!"

Dear Little Wife: "I know I can't wear them, darling; I only bought them because they were so very cheap."

Indulgent Husband: "Humph!"—Judy.

**SHORT AND SWEET.**—In one of the courts lately there was a long and heated discussion between the counsel as to whether a witness should be allowed to answer the following question:—"What did Mary say?" The judge took some time to decide the point, and at last allowed it. The question was put to the witness by the defence, and the reply was short and sweet:—"Nothing, sir."

#### LIGHT AS AIR.

Customer (to proprietor of large establishment): "I want a mooring suit, please."

Proprietor: "What is the bereavement, may I ask?"

Customer: "My mother-in-law."

Proprietor (to distant shopman): "Mr. Brown, show this gentleman to the 'Light Affliction Department.'"—Pun.

A PARTY named Fowler, who has something to do with mines, brought an action against the "Times," because the "Times" City article writer asked who Mr. Fowler was. In future, should anybody want to know who Mr. Fowler was, you can tell them that he was some one who brought an action and—lost it.

[Families and schools supplied in quantities very cheap.]—Judy.

**DUCK SHOOTING.**—"Speaking of shooting ducks," said an old Chesapeake sportsman named Selby, in that soft and searching way for which he is so justly celebrated, "speaking of shooting ducks puts me in mind of the great storm that occurred when I was down the bay last year. An awful storm arose, and was so fierce that it drove all the ducks in the bay into a pond, covering about an acre, near our house. I lost so many ducks crowded into that pond that I

could not see a drop of water. I went into the house and got my double-barrelled shotgun, and discharged both barrels right in the midst of them; but to my astonishment, they arose in the air, leaving not a solitary duck in the pond. It astonished me at first; but as soon as the ducks rose a few hundred yards in the air and commenced to separate a little, the ducks began to drop, and whether you believe it or not, I picked up twenty-nine barrels of ducks, and it was a poor season for ducks too. You see the ducks were wedged in so solid in the pond that when they rose they carried the dead into the air with them, and when they separated down came the twenty-nine barrels of dead ducks."

#### GUINOA PIGA.

(Vide the late oil-wells swindle.)

Air—"Cherry Ripe."

Guinea pigs, guinea pigs, pigs, I cry—  
As directors qualify!

At your feet your shares we lay—  
Not a penny there's to pay!

'Tis high-sounding names we want,  
As decoy ducks for our plant;

Names to draw the public in,  
Place our shares, and sack their tin.

Guinea pigs, guinea pigs, pigs, I cry—  
From the West-end, come and try!

Guinea pigs, guinea pigs, pigs, I cry—  
Of the City why fight shy?

With shares for the taking, if you please,  
And, besides, director's fees!

Office work—an hour a day,  
Lots to get, and naught to pay!

Flats agog to risk their tin,  
Giv'n good names to draw them in.

So guinea pigs, guinea pigs, pigs, I cry—  
As directors qualify!

If you ask me what, pond,  
Such qualifications be,

I will answer, to be wise  
When to stop both ears and eyes!

Shut your fingers on your feet;  
See as your promoter sees,

Hear as your promoter hears—  
For what else are these long ears?

Be as fat as he is keen:  
As he's wide-awake be green.

Then high up you will be cried,  
As director qualified!

Guinea pigs, guinea pigs, pigs, I cry—  
Why join stock adventure fly?

If the company should fall,  
And you o'er the coals they call,

There's the counsel and the judge  
To shareholders to try "Fudge!"

How could gentlemen like you  
Not be parties to a do?

Such a buffer are your names  
Twixt the greenhorns and our games.

So, guinea pigs, guinea pigs, pigs, I cry—  
As directors qualify!—Punch.

I HAVE been invited to inspect the portrait of my old friend Kenealy, who has recently been taken in wax, and put into Madame Tussaud's instructive exhibition.

It is a sweetly pretty figure, only wanting my umbrella to make it perfect. I cried when I saw it. So did a venerable fat man (a perfect stranger to me), and I left him my handkerchief. A courteous attendant said he thought we had better move on.—Judy.

**BUT HE MEANT WELL PERHAPS!**

**Agricultural Party:** "Well, I dowsay it wor a comfort to the poor soul, miss, as you says, being there. You see she war all along o' they 'taters, you see, and her says, 'Moidn they taters is proper hoe'd,' her says, 'In the two acre field,' her says; and says I, 'Dun'ee fret ye'sen 'long o' they taters, mother,' says oi, 'bat get your do-in done,' says oi, 'an' mak' no more ado about it.'—Judy.

**RICH AND POOR.**—A case heard a few days back does more to show the curious inequality of our criminal laws—or rather the application of them—than would columns of loaded type. The daughter of a labouring man resident at Hanley found a cigar-case containing three twenty-pound notes and some gold, and took it home to her father. The father, an ignorant countryman, evidently believing in the old maxim that "findings are keepings," spent some of the money, and subsequently found himself before the local bench, who, with that due regard for the rights of property which characterizes our provincial magistrates, sentenced him to twelve months' imprisonment. We suppose this is quite right; but we cannot help comparing the position of this ignorant and almost involuntary criminal with that of the young "lady," who, after being guilty of a deliberate and wanton theft, was discharged because her relatives were wealthy. And yet we are told there is justice in England for all.



There is; but the poor unfortunately get too much of it, laid on with perhaps too liberal a hand. Now, if each of these pounds had been a thousand—But it is useless to speculate. It is also dangerous now—a day, as Sir Henry James and the law reports amply testify.—*Fun.*

**TWO SIDES TO A QUESTION.**  
A man, living on the banks of a river, one day discovered a boat floating down, half full of water. Jumping in, he hauled it to the shore.

The question presented to his mind now was how to get the water out. He studied for a long time; Suddenly a brilliant idea seemed to strike him.

He rushed home, secured a gimlet, and bored a hole in the bottom. The boat, as a matter of fact, sank at once to the bottom. He gazed for a moment in stupid dismay. Finally walking off, he exclaimed to himself:

"Faith, an' there's always two sides to a question, in'ow?"

**ANOTHER.**  
She has the most alluring eyes—  
A little Grecian nose;  
She wears the most bewitching gait,  
And part-coloured hose!  
Her touch can thrill one strangely when  
One clasps her in the dance;  
At least, they tell me so—but then  
I never had the chance!  
Her melting tones, so people say,  
Intoxicate the brain,  
And leave, when she has gone away,  
A joy akin to pain.  
Her voice is like sweet music, when  
Its strains are soft and low;  
So those who've heard it say—but then,  
I never did you know!  
She makes the most asperp ragout—  
Knits stockings by the score,  
Knows Latin, and Italian too,  
Greek, French, and plenty more!  
She's fast the girl to sweeten life—  
Adorable!—divine!  
In short, she is a perfect wife!  
But then she isn't mine!—*Fun.*

**WHO TRIUMPHS?**  
Apropos of the comet, a Paris paper tells a good story:

Monsieur S—— enters a barber's shop to be shaved, and the barber, as is customary, begins a conversation.

"Ah, monsieur," says he, "don't talk to me about that horrible comet! They say that it foretells the end of the world."

"Bah!"

"Yes, on the eighteenth the beasts will die, and on the twentieth it will be the human beings' turn."

"Good gracious, you frighten me," exclaimed Monsieur S——, starting up. "Who will there be to shave me on the nineteenth?"

**A BIG STORY.**

Mr. Sayre, of Lexington, Mass., and a good story is told of him, the better for its truth. Some years since an overseer on one of his farms told him he needed some hogs on his place. Says Mr. Sayre:

"Very well, go and buy four or five thousand and eight piglets, and put them on the farm."

The man, accustomed to obey, and that without questioning, asked:

"Shall I take the money with me to purchase them?"

"No, sir. They all know me. Send them here—I'll pay for them, or give you money to pay when you get them."

The overseer went his way, and in two weeks returned, when the following conversation took place:

"Well, Mr. Sayre, I can't get that many pigs. I have ridden all over the country, all about, and can buy between eight and nine hundred."

"Eight or nine hundred what?"

"Eight or nine hundred pigs."

"Eight or nine hundred piglets! Who told you to buy that many piglets? Are you a fool?"

"You told me to buy them two weeks since. I have tried to do it."

"Eight or nine hundred piglets! I never told you any such thing!"

"But you did—you told me to go and buy four or five thousand pigs."

"I did so much thing! I told you to go and buy four or five thousand and their little piglets, and you have done it, I should think."

Mr. Sayre has gone to sell in the autumn.

**WANTED.**—An advertisement states that a lady is required as a nursery governess in a gentleman's family. Having done this it goes on to say that in addition to a thorough knowledge of English, French,

music and Latin, the lady will be required to make the children's clothes. Gentle children are, as a rule, better clad than taught; but the reverse is likely to be the case in this instance. Such combination of professions is, to say the least, peculiar, and if it is to obtain we may look before long for announcements of "Tailoring and Tuition done here," or "Gentlemen's Garments and Grammar repaired on the Shortest Notice."—*Fun.*

### THE LACE WEAVERS.

Once in Madrid—the story goes—  
Between two artisans arose  
A question of such special weight  
It held them long in grave debate,  
Though each—'tis only fair to say—  
Disputed it in a candid way.  
Unlike debaters who, in sooth,  
Care more for victory than truth.

Both men were weavers, we are told;  
One made galleons, or lace-of-gold;  
The other lace-of-linen fine  
At once in texture and design.  
"Who," said the former, "would suppose  
That while (as everybody knows)  
My lace of purest gold is wrought  
For vastly less it may be bought  
Than yours, my neighbour, which, instead  
Of gold, is made of flaxen thread?  
Pray tell me why (I can't divine)  
Yours sells for thrice as much as mine."  
"Faith!" said the other, "to my mind  
The reason is not hard to find;  
You work in gold, and I in thread;  
If, saying so, the whole were said,  
Your lace would surely far exceed  
My lace in value. 'Tis agreed!  
You work in gold; I grant it—still  
Your best galleons show little skill  
Compared with what the eye may trace  
In my fine webs of linen lace;  
Rich workmanship, my worthy friend,  
Gives value gold can never lend!"

**MORAL.**  
Hence critics, who are fain to smile  
When readers praise an author's style,  
As if the matter were the test  
Of what in authorship is best,  
May learn how much the writer's art  
By style and finish may impart  
To works which else had failed to claim  
The worth that gives undying fame!

J. G. S.

### GEMS.

THAT your friends well, but not often.  
NOTHING overcomes passion more than silence.  
Is better were within better were come out.  
It is better to praise poverty than to bear it.  
BETTER to slip with the foot than with the tongue.  
HAPPINESS is a shy nymph, and if you chase her  
you will never catch her. But go quietly on and do  
your duty and she will come to you.  
HAPPINESS consists in having plenty to do, and to  
keep on doing it. A lazy man is always tired. Doing  
nothing is one of the hardest jobs on earth.  
THE old are allured by gold, the young by pleasure,  
the weak by flattery, cowards by fear, the  
courageous by ambition; a thousand baits for each  
lustre, each bait concealing the same deadly hook.

### STATISTICS.

In the financial year ending March last there were issued 76,986,249 post-cards and 61,765,300 postal wrappers. In the corresponding period of the previous year the numbers were 64,233,280 post-cards and 74,940,780 postal wrappers.

**MERCHANT NAVY.**—Although the German navy consists at present of only twenty-three vessels, with sixteen gun-boats and six torpedo boats, the mercantile marine ranks next to those of England, America, and France. It consists of 219 steamers of 165,178 tons, and 268 sailing ships of 1,143,910 tons. The former have increased since 1867 by nearly 50, and the latter by more than 20 per cent. It has nearly reached the strength of France, which has 316 steamers of 240,376 tons, and 4,951 sailing vessels of 986,705 tons, its tonnage having thus already exceeded that of the French Marine. England and its colonies have 4,948 steamers of 1,641,000 tons, and 32,491 sailing ships of 5,578,030 tons; while America has 3,625 steamers of 1,043,205 tons, and 12,949 sailing ships of 2,146,555 tons. Next to Germany comes Russia with 185 steamers of 36,000 tons, and 3,089 sailing vessels of 771,292 tons. Austria has 97 steamers of 52,005 tons, and 2,692 sail-

ing vessels of 238,176 tons. Sweden has 400 steamers of 22,000 tons; Italy 118 steamers of 87,810 tons, and as many as 19,488 sailing vessels of 1,031,907 tons; and Spain 131 steamers, mostly colonial, of 45,514 tons, and 4,863 sailing ships of 845,186 tons. The merchant navy of Germany is manned by 90,000 sailors, while that of France has 96,000.

### HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

**INHALING SAL-AMMONIAC.**—Muriate of ammonia, in vapour, has latterly been added to the list of medicines taken by inhalation. Dr. Liebermann has effected several surprising cures of croupy coughs, sore throat by this method. The cures were obtained in from two weeks to six months, with four inhalations daily, each lasting five to ten minutes. The croupy men under treatment are compelled to avoid alcoholic drinks, tobacco and spices. Public speakers and singers were likewise cured of the affliction. When the disease extends to the nasal membrane the patient should pass the vapour from the mouth through the nostrils, as some do tobacco smoke. If the malady extends into the Eustachian tube (often causing deafness) the patient should close the mouth and hold the nostrils tightly, and then blow as if to blow the nose, and the vapour will pass into the tubes. Deafness is either ameliorated or cured. In serious asthma, with no pulmonary emphysema or dilatation of the heart, two cases were permanently cured out of six, and the others had the intervals between the paroxysms prolonged. In bronchitis the inhalations were taken six times daily. In twenty-two chronic cases the cure was effected in from seventeen to thirty-eight days. In twenty-six cases associated with pulmonary emphysema the secretion and cough were greatly benefited, and the cure was effected in from six weeks to two months; the emphysema, however, remained. In twelve cases of pertussis the paroxysms of cough were much relieved in seven, and the disease cured in from three to five weeks; in the others there was no result. This vapour gives rise to more or less irritation of the mucous membrane, with loss and renewal of the epithelium, and local hypersecretion. Such temporary aggravation of symptoms is soon followed by relief. The pulse is increased, a sense of heat and moisture of the skin is often felt, and there is sometimes profuse perspiration, improvement of the voice, and relief of the cough and tickling sensations. In severe cases general treatment should accompany the inhalation.

### MISCELLANEOUS.

**STATUE OF ST. JOHN.**—A fine marble statue of St. John at the age of fourteen, believed to be the production of Michael Angelo, has been unearthed at Pisa.

ACCORDING to an official paper just published, there were in the year ending the 31st of March last 6,482 refreshment houses in the United Kingdom, the amount of duty charged being 6,812.

THERE was a decrease in the stamp duties on "playing cards" in the year ended the 31st of March last. In 1873 the duty was 12,865*l.*, and in 1874 12,582*l.*

TWO Liberals of Kidderminster, after turning out Baron Grant, made a claim upon him for more than 5,000*l.* legal expenses. This has been taxed down to something under 2,000*l.*

**THE ALBION MEMORIAL.**—A good many people thought the Albert memorial, like the Duke of Wellington's tomb in St. Paul's Cathedral, would never be completed in our time. We hear, however, that the bronze statue which is to be placed upon the granite pedestal under the dome has just been successfully cast, and may therefore be expected to be raised very soon. The sculptor was the late Mr. Foley.

**OLD ENGLISH MINIATURES.**—Messrs. Christie, Manson, and Woods sold by auction the other day a collection of old English miniatures. Among the transactions were:—Prince Rupert, 79*l.* 16*s.*, Colnaghi; Theresa, Lady Shirley, by Hillyard, 153*l.*; Addington; Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, by Bernard Lens the younger, 64*l.* 12*s.*, Noseda; George Villiers, first Duke of Buckingham, by P. Oliver, 81*l.* 18*s.*, Colnaghi.

**CATS.**—Dr. Stables, in his book on cats, treats his readers to the following statistics: "It is the very lowest average to say that every cat in the country does away with twenty mice or rats per annum; and also on the lowest average, each mouse or rat will destroy one pound's worth of property a year. Well, there are in the British Islands over 4,000,000 cats; that, multiplied by 20, gives an annual saving of 80,000,000*l.* worth of property, and these cats do not take 4,000,000*l.* to keep them alive—not more at any rate."

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## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

F. H. and E. G.—The matter should be deferred for a year or two at the least.

T. C. R.—We believe the works of the company in question are situated at Millwall.

TORRILL T.—Rather too young. After another voyage or two will be time enough.

A. U. C. E.—The announcement savours too much of the quality of a commercial partnership to be admissible.

ALBERT and HAROLD.—Sufficient time has not yet elapsed to acquire the discretion requisite to make a suitable choice.

W. D. B. N.—A little more experience will be of great service to you. Twenty-one is a very early age at which to settle down.

T. M.—Your expectations seem to be great, and how you can possibly manage such a large cargo, should you succeed in obtaining it, is a puzzle.

ALFRED F.—We really cannot assist you. The case you refer to is one of those in which—

"We are sadly afraid

Too many lovers will puzzle a maid."

ANY.—Perhaps he has forgotten all about it; if so, the fact that your feeling is the deeper of the two has been demonstrated. Thereby hangs a tale; have you the patience to think it out?

J. G.—There can be no difference of opinion as to the merits of the illustrious men to whom you allude. Probably, however, the poet considered that the works by which he enriched the literature of his country form his best monument.

PAPA'S PET should not wish to quit his side just yet; as to "Wilful Bessie," if she could but know even the thousandth part of the unhappiness produced by "wilfulness," she would make strenuous endeavours to get rid of that propensity before she is much older.

LOVING NELLIE.—Some preliminary steps appear to be necessary. As you are under age the property to which you allude is probably in the hands of trustees, in which case you should inform them of your desire to marry, and take their advice thereupon.

T. F.—You should be loyal to the lady of your love and believe her version of the affair; then let bygones be bygones, never more to be alluded to. The only objection to your being formally engaged is that, in the opinion of many, you are much too young to marry.

AD. L. (New York).—There was no connection between the New York Reader and the London Reader, consequently you must not expect in the latter merely the conclusion of such tales as were left unfinished in the former.

A. B. C.—The expression "upwards," as applied to number is indefinite. To say that "he has upwards of a thousand pounds," may mean that he has a thousand and ten pounds, or sixteen or seventeen hundred pounds, or any other sum between these two extremes. Upwards, however, used in such a phrase as the above always means over.

DOROTHY.—We would dissuade you from attempting to remove the hair from the arms. In the hands of an unskilled person the compound needed for such a purpose may produce corrosion and disfigurement of the skin, as well as danger to the general health by the admission of poison to the system by reason of absorption. These are risks too serious to be encountered.

CURRACH CAMP.—In the case of intestate the eldest son takes the whole of the father's real estate. The personal property is divided equally between all the children. This rule applies only to estates vested strictly in the father, and not to any interest which the father may have had under any settlement the devolution of which interest would of course be provided for under the terms of the settlement.

HARD AS OAK.—We are sorry we do not see our way to assist you in what we can very well understand is a great and bitter trouble. The case can only be dealt with by a solicitor. That is your course if you still wish to pursue the matter. You would think us unsympathetic if we advised you to conceal this trouble from the world, and yet experience proves that such a grief is better borne in quietude than in publicity.

A. BOMBYX.—If you state that the British Army and reserved forces amount to half a million of men, you state a fact truly, but one which may cause some misapprehension unless it is attended by an explanation. The above number is made up as follows: 100,000 of all ranks at home, 24,000 in the colonies, 62,500 in India, 32,000 Army Reserve, 118,000 militia, 12,500 yeomanry, and 161,150 volunteers. The number of field guns at home is 325 and in India 348.

JIM THURS and ALFRA.—Inmates of an hospital, whether patients or attendants, no doubt are greatly comforted by a woman's care. For it is amid such scenes

that she is always found to be, and that without flattery, "a ministering angel." Yet a woman would bestow her devoted, patient, soothing aid where she might not care to give her love. Wards of hospitals are not Ophelia's bowers. She would visit such a ward to see one who was already her lover, but to entertain a proposal of love from some unknown inmate—well, she would at least require a long time for consideration.

HIRENDA.—Your application is tinged with a slight inconsistency. Having informed us of your extreme youth you state you are not in good circumstances, a state of things as harmless as it is natural and comprehensible. Why then, in the name of all that is rational, do you conclude with that chivalrous announcement, "Money no object?" Further, you consider your prospects good because you expect to take your degree in about two years hence. Has it not occurred to you that a practice does not necessarily follow a qualification and that it will not be very kind of you deliberately to set about winning a girl's affections while the prospects of a home are somewhat shady?

AMT. ROBERT.—The colour of the look of hair sent appears to be decidedly red, but it is so bright and clear that it cannot be considered to detract in any way from the appearance of its owner, that is of course if our estimation be approved. 2. The writing and every other thing connected with your letter are particularly nice. 3. A light blue colour would, we think, suit you admirably. 4. A hairdresser would sell you a roll of cosmetic to darken your eyebrows, but you should be advised not to use it; rather rely simply on the appearance with which nature has endowed you, remembering that there is some truth in the proverb, "Beauty when unadorned is adored the most."

## KISSING THE CHILDREN.

Kisses in the morning

Make the day soon bright,

Filling every corner

With a gleam of light;

And what happiness he misses

Who, affection's impulse scoring,

Departs, and gives no kisses

To the children in the morning.

Many think it folly;

Many say it's bling;

Very much depending

On whose lips you kiss!

But the truth I am confessing,

And I'd have you all take warning,

If you covet any blessing,

Kiss the children in the morning!

Kisses in the evening

When the lights are low

Set two hearts a-dancing

With affection's glow

And the angels awarn in numbers

Round the pillow they are pressing

Who are wooed to peaceful slumbers

By a dear one's fond caressing.

Kisses in the morning

Are not out of place;

Kisses in the evening

Have a special grace;

And it seems to our own hearts

For indulgence a lawful reason;

Sweetest tulips! I mean kisses!

Ye are never out of season!

J. F.

A YOUNG LADY writes to us that she finds it difficult to keep up a flow of conversation. After an evening is over she often thinks of things which she might have said, but they did not occur to her at the opportune moment. The first requisite towards becoming a really good talker is to think clearly. Form definite and accurate ideas on subjects. Be sure that your information is correct and thorough. Then there is but little difficulty in talking. There is no kind of hesitation or embarrassment which results from nervousness, but that is soon overcome, and a clear-headed person seldom experiences any permanent impediment in conversation. Of course, there is in this as in everything else a great deal in habit. Conversational powers are susceptible of great improvement by cultivation. It is well to practise entertaining to the best of your ability your intimate associates, the members of your own family. In this way you become better qualified to interest others in conversation. It is not desirable to be a chatterbox. An excessive and stupid talker may be even more tiresome than the most reticent person. But the habit of talking fluently with cheerfulness, humour and wit, is one of the pleasantest and most enviable of accomplishments.

T. H. D.—1. The solidification of, as you term it, the hardening of soap is a simple matter, but it requires the appliance of certain thick frames or bars of wood and certain iron rods and screws. To these frames the soap is transferred from the boilers in a liquid state and allowed to cool. Then certain adjustments of the frames and rods are made, and subsequently the frames are separated, when, after a little exposure to the drying influence of the air, the soap is easily detached from the frames, and is then cut into bars and packed in boxes for sale. 2. Dr. Ure gives a receipt for making soft soap, which we transcribe for your satisfaction, although we confess that the utility of such a course seems questionable when the extensive plant and skilled workmanship required for the manufacture of the article are taken into consideration. The materials employed are tallow, grease or kitchen fat, palm oil, resin, and an alkaline lye of base potash, the latter being formed by layers of lime and bone potash placed in cast iron cylinders having perforated bottoms, through which water is allowed to percolate until it has dissolved about two per cent. of the alkali rendered caustic by the action of the quick lime. The quantity of resin must always be less than half the fats employed, and before using must be reduced to coarse powder. A ton of fat requires 200 gallons of lye for the first boiling and a considerable quantity for the subsequent boilings. The process of the manufacture of soft soap is thus described by Dr. Ure: "A portion of the oil being poured into the pan and heated to nearly the boiling point of water, a certain quantity of

lye is introduced, the fire being kept up so as to bring the mixture to a boiling state. Then some more oil and lye are added alternately until the whole quantity of oil destined for the pan is introduced. The emulsion is kept up in the gentlest manner possible, and stronger lye is occasionally added till the workman judges the saponification to be perfect. The boiling becomes progressively less tumultuous, the frothy mass subsides, the paste grows transparent and gradually thickens. The operation is considered to be finished when the paste ceases to affect the tongue with an acrid pungency, when all milkiness and opacity disappear, and when a little of the soap placed to cool upon a glass plate assumes the proper consistency." 3. A list of musical instrument makers is given in the London Directory, a copy of which will doubtless be found in some leading establishment or institution connected with your town.

FUCHSIA L., rather short and stout, of a cheerful disposition, would like to correspond with a tall young man about twenty-five, who is fond of home.

HYACINTH, tall, dark, good looking, wishes to correspond with a young gentleman who would make a loving husband; he must be fond of home and music.

ROSS, eighteen, medium height, dark eyes, considered good looking, wishes to correspond with a dark young man; he must be good looking, fond of home, and of good connections.

DOLPHIN STRAKER, twenty-one, 5ft. 3in., fair complexion, light blue eyes, fond of home comforts, would like to marry a young lady, about his own stamp; a resident of London preferred.

GRACE, tall, light hair, dark eyes, very ladylike, handsome, musical, fond of dancing, would like to correspond with a dark gentleman, tall, respectfully connected, with a good income.

NELLIE, twenty, brown eyes and hair, considered good looking, amiable, a good musician, fond of home and children, would like to correspond with a tall, fair gentleman; he must be musical and fond of home.

LENA, nineteen, tall, dark complexion, brown eyes and hair, handsome, good tempered, a good pianist, would like to correspond with a tall, fair gentleman, who would make an affectionate husband. He must be respectfully connected.

FAIRY, nineteen, medium height, of a loving disposition, and domesticated, would like to correspond with a dark young man, about twenty-four. She prefers a mechanic, who would make a kind husband to a loving wife.

JESSIE, twenty, tall, dark, considered good looking, musical, and fond of home would like to correspond with a gentleman; prefers a surveyor, or some other profession; would make a loving wife to a kind husband. Would like an income of two or three hundred pounds a year.

OLIVE and MAUD, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen. "Olive" is nineteen, has dark eyes, and hair, fair complexion, and is fond of home. "Maud" is eighteen, has dark hair, blue eyes and fair complexion, is fond of music and home. Clerks preferred.

## COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED.

MARIA E. is responded to by—"J. L.," twenty-eight, medium height, rather dark, and a steady tradesman. F. E. S., by—"Fanny," who thinks he is all she requires.

RING BOLT CHASER by—"Blue-eyed Nellie," who is good looking, and thinks she will suit him.

SHIVER THE MINE by—"Lovely Polly," who is good looking, and thinks she is all he requires.

E. J. B. by—"Fortune Allen," twenty, good looking, has dark eyes, and hair, fair complexion, and is fond of home.

SKY-SAIL JON by—"Grace," who is dark, good looking, well educated, has a small income, and expectations, and thinks she is all he requires.

R. H. A. by—"A Tradesman's Daughter," twenty-five, of a loving disposition, medium height, domesticated, fond of home, and a total abstainer.

HARD AS OAK by—"A. H.," who thinks he would suit her, and that she could make him happy. He is twenty, has blue eyes, dark hair, and a fair complexion.

BONNIE BILLY by—"Clay," who is nineteen, tall, fair, has light brown hair, gray eyes, is loving, domesticated, and would make his home happy.

SILVERSMITH by—"Daisy C.," twenty, rather tall and slender, with brown hair and eyes, is considered very good looking and ladylike; is also a Protestant. Has no money at present, but will have later on, and is of a very loving disposition.

J. J. M. by—"Millicent B.," twenty-two, tall, dark, and considered amiable. She is fond of home and is of a loving disposition; and by—"Wicked Eyes," twenty-five, short, domesticated, and is considered good looking and amiable by those who know her.

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London: Published for the Proprietor, at 334, Strand, by G. A. SMITH.